

**Text and Texture: An Arts-based Exploration of Transformation in Adult
Learning**

A Dissertation

submitted by

Enid E. Larsen

**In partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy**

**LESLEY UNIVERSITY
May 2010**

Lesley University
Ph.D. Program in Educational Studies
DISSERTATION APPROVAL FORM

Student's Name: **Enid E. Larsen**

Dissertation Title: **Text and Texture: An Arts-based Exploration of Transformation in Adult Learning**

School: **Lesley University, School of Education**

Degree for which Dissertation is submitted: **Ph. D. in Educational Studies**

Approvals

In the judgment of the following signatories, this Dissertation meets the academic standards that have been established for the Doctor of Philosophy degree.

Dissertation Committee
Chair

Gene Dwyer 03.31.10
(signature) (date)

Dissertation Committee Member

Sarahly 3-31-10
(signature) (date)

Dissertation Committee Member

William T. Stok 3/31/10
(signature) (date)

Director of the Ph. D. Program

Caroline Hellen
(signature) (date)

Dean, School of Education
(signature) (date)

William T. Stok 3/31/10
(signature) (date)

Text and Texture: An Arts-based Exploration of Transformation in Adult Learning

Abstract

This research explored the transformational and co-transformational potential of collage, assemblage and mixed media in an accelerated undergraduate adult course on imagination and creativity. The methods were qualitative and arts-based artist-teacher inquiry within a constructivist art class for ten, female adult learners. Informed by the researcher's living inquiry through visual auto-ethnography, a collagist methodology shaped the research, including syllabus construction, course delivery and data gathering. Process was an emergent and interpretive analytic tool, drawn from multiple perspectives of artwork and reflections by the students, and the multiple identities inherent to the artist-teacher researcher.

This research indicates that collage and assemblage were effective methods for artistic expression and exploration of self with these adult learners. Collage and assemblage allowed the learners to explore and express multiple, complex feelings simultaneously in an accelerated experience of perception. Collagist methodology facilitated transformation of assumptions, perceptions, feelings, and behavior within the students' and the artist-teacher researcher's living inquiries.

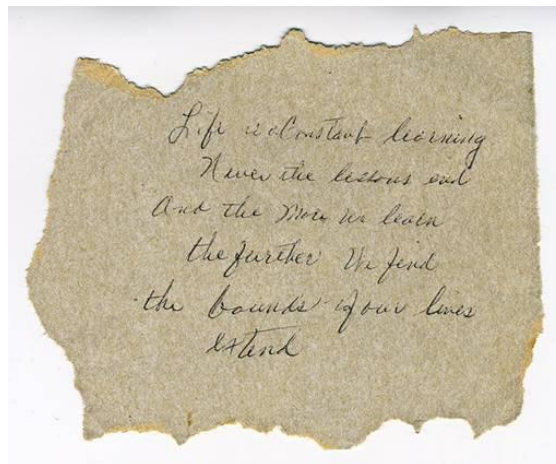
These adult learners required significant amounts of restoration and reparation in their return to education. The collage process increased their sense of agency in dealing with unfamiliarity and identified impediments to transformational learning. As a malleable concept, collage provided a metaphor and analogy for adult learning and modern living while simultaneously providing the students with an opportunity for stimulating discovery, profound pleasure and energized spirit. As a way of knowing, collage contributed to transformation within the students' lives.

Key words: transformation, transformational learning, adult-learning, arts-based, artist-teacher research, collage, living inquiry, way of knowing.

Dedication and Acknowledgements

I am deeply grateful to everyone who has shown me what possibilities lay within living inquiry - my students, my committee, my dear husband and children, my sister, and especially my mother. "Thank you, Mom, for the trajectory."

Life is constant learning
Never the lessons end
And the more we learn
the further we find
the bounds of our lives
extend.



Hand-written poetry, a literary ruin, found in my mother's china cupboard among her linens, tablecloths and life ephemera. I remember reading it countless times in my childhood ethnographic hunts.

Table of Contents

	Front Page	
	Dissertation Approval Form	
	Title Page	
	Abstract	
	Acknowledgements	
	Table of Contents	
	Poem: The Way It Is	
Chapter I	Introduction to the Research	9
Chapter II	Introduction to Literature Reviews	13
	Qualitative Research	16
	Arts-based Research	24
	Transformational Learning	50
Chapter III	Visual Autoethnography: An Artful Encounter with Eros	60
Chapter IV:	Research Methods	85
Chapter V:	Thematic Analysis	104
	(themes on continuums of human experience)	
	Cognitive	105
	Affective	129
	Sensory	147
	Spiritual	164
	Relational	177
Chapter VI:	Discussion and Implications for Future Study	195
	References	219
	Appendices	229
	Consent Form Sample	229
	Course Syllabus	231
	Image and Photo Index	
	(located in Supplementary File)	

The Way It Is

There's a thread you follow. It goes among
things that change. But it doesn't change.
People wonder about what you are pursuing.

You have to explain about the thread.

But it is hard for others to see. While you hold it you can't get lost.

Tragedies happen; people get hurt
or die; and you suffer and get old.

Nothing you do can stop time's unfolding.

You don't ever let go of the thread.

William Stafford

Chapter One

Introduction to the Research

This research is focused on the phenomenon of transformation and exploring the potential for arts and creative processes in transformational and co-transformational learning in adult education. A primary objective is to increase understanding of realities and factors in transformational learning - that is, of perspective change or even deep, paradigmatic change - into clearer understanding and practical usage for adult learners and educators through a deeper understanding of creative art processes in adult learning. At the heart of the research is the challenge of how I can be better equipped to recognize, facilitate and manage learning at the edges of knowing (Eisner, 1997; Berger, 2004; Diaz 2004;) in constructivist learning environments (Hein, 2002).

As a college administrator in a graduate and professional studies school in a Liberal Arts College, as a professor, a Social Work therapist, and a self-taught visual artist, I am deeply appreciative of the many routes that lead to learning and development. Throughout my interdisciplinary career, which spans over thirty years, I have remained committed to transformational learning within the individual - to the kind of learning that is driven and informed from inside out, and to actualization of the Self - as a means of contributing vibrant, meaningful life back to culture. I want to become more accomplished in facilitating transformational learning because, simply, this is my life's work, and because individual transformational learning is an important, valuable and threatened component in the education of adult learners.

Despite recurring trends towards positivism and pragmatism in educational research and delivery, interest in the phenomenon of transformation continues

to grow in post-modern culture, evidenced by socio-cultural and educational disparities, educational debates and reform, spiritual exploration, burgeoning self-help books, a call for ecological renewal, to name a few. When encountering such immediate individual and cultural need, an interest in the phenomenon of transformation can take on idealized, perhaps, even over-whelming forms and scale. I seek to find my place of contribution in the culture of higher education in realistic and accessible forms to educators of adult learners, and to adult learners, themselves.

My research on the phenomena of transformation is a means by which I am making the archetype of transformation more conscious, not only for my own individuation and professional development, but particularly as a contribution to adult learners as a means to increase development of Self (Jung, 1969) in adult learner education. I seek increased perspective and deeper insight about the phenomenon of transformation through creative processes derived from art studio methods - both my own and the work of my adult learning students.

To prepare for my research, I began with living inquiry of myself - a self-taught artist, a teaching artist, an artist scholar - each archetype respecting the learning experience and growth of one who learns through experience, and who then shines light on the paths of others coming along on the learning journey. I identify myself with "life history researchers with deep roots in meaning-making systems that honor the many and diverse ways of knowing - personal, narrative, embodied, artistic, aesthetic - that stand outside sanctioned intellectual frameworks"(Knowles & Cole, 2007, p.7). I wanted to learn from my most solid point of authority – my own personal experience and the rendering of self – because, in the end, I wanted to be better able to validate and facilitate my

students' knowledge, as it can be gained, from their own rich, personal experiences.

Through the genre of artist-teacher research, the following dissertation is an arts-based exploration of transformational learning depicted in two ways: first, through rendering of self in visual autoethnography and second, through living inquiry, arts-based research of ten female adult learners who, upon returning to college to complete their education, completed an art course in imagination and creativity. The studio work and reflections issued from the course provided data for analysis of their processes.

The Chapters

Chapter One introduces the research and provides a context and rationale for the exploration of transformational and co-transformational learning in adult learning through creative art processes.

Chapter Two provides three literature reviews, beginning with an historical scan of the history of qualitative research, and a second which contextualizes the research in the more recent experimental time frame of arts-based research. A third literature review of transformation explores the phenomena of transformational learning in adult learning, including discussion on attempts to define transformational learning, transformational practices, and the value and challenges of transformational learning.

Chapter Three portrays visual autoethnography conducted as living inquiry and my initial exploration as a self-taught artist, a teaching artist, and an artist scholar. The studio experience and the fine arts methods of collage, assemblage

and mixed media established the impetus and foundation for the subsequent artist-teacher research in collage and mixed media in an adult learning classroom. The chapter documents the visual autoethnography through photographs of the art work produced and discussion of the work and studio process.

Chapter Four depicts research methods used with ten female students in an undergraduate adult learning art class in *Art, Collage and Imagination* through the question: *How can the use of collage, assemblage and mixed media be transformational and co-transformational in an undergraduate adult learning course on imagination and creativity?* The methods chapter provides definitions, context, data-gathering activities, assumptions, descriptions of participants, method of analysis, and limitations of the research.

Chapter Five is a thematic analysis of the research based on themes on continuums of human experience through ways of knowing that were initially evidenced in the visual auto-ethnography. Ways of knowing depicted in the research analysis include cognitive, affective, sensory, spiritual, and relational. The analysis is documented through photographs and discussion of the students' art work and studio processes.

Chapter Six provides a discussion of transformational and co-transformational learning evidenced in the research through collage and studio experiences in adult learning, both through the research participant and the researcher. The chapter includes photographs of artwork and text that portray and exemplify collagic integration of text and texture. Implications for future study and the potential of collage as both a method and metaphor in adult learning classrooms are discussed.

Chapter Two

Introduction to the Literature Reviews

My decision to research recursively, along the path of my own experiences, placed me squarely in the stream of educational debate, new ideas and on-going discord regarding validity and credibility in research - not only in the use of art-based methods but particularly on the use of the “I” voice to produce and demonstrate knowledge (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000/2008). What research method will allow me to find my voice, exercise my words and validate myself as an educational researcher and as a visual artist? What is the relationship between researchers and artists? How can I explore my assumptions through the perspective and experience of an artist?

My literature reviews were driven not only by my own disenchantment with traditional research methods but also that expressed by my students in both undergraduate adult degree completion programs and master education programs. I learned that, as a program director and educator of adult students, advisement and classroom teaching necessarily includes acknowledgement that research is a frequently maligned requisite in education and an obstacle through which some students require careful guidance and reparative learning experiences.

A practical worry for adult learners is utility - that the investment of time and effort required by a research project will be something apart from their educational and practice goals, and will ultimately compete with the little time they have as adult learners. Worse, is a concern for meaninglessness - that the research process will be an exercise with little connection to their working world and, more so, to their passions and interests.

Cochran-Smith & Lytle (1993) state something is missing in educational and teacher research for this anticipated and experienced disconnection to exist so commonly. There is a sense that, along the way, educational systems have not laid adequate groundwork or provided experiences for adult learners to embrace the values, processes and potential of research as vital and meaningful means of knowledge acquisition (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993; Diaz, 2004). Kettering in Hubbard & Power (1999) states research is a “high-hat” word that needlessly scares people, teachers, in particular (p. 1). Furthermore, Cochran-Smith & Lytle (ibid.) state that even teachers who have daily access, extensive expertise, and knowledge of classroom teaching and learning lack formal ways for their knowledge to become part of the literature on teaching.

I recognized myself in the population of discontented and disconnected adult learners for whom traditional quantitative and even qualitative research was an encounter with methods and propositions that seemed discontinuous with my professional passions. My predilection for learning through images, especially from and through the concept of Self (Jung, 1969), was typically greeted as invalid means of creating generalizable knowledge - good for me and maybe, randomly, good for others.

Curiosity and puzzlement over this pedagogical disenfranchisement, the need for a research methodology, and longing for professional affinities motivated this literature review. My literature review explores current arts-based research and pioneering artist - teacher researchers that are cutting paths and shining lights on those paths for me, and others like me, to explore. The literature review first establishes a context of qualitative research and then explores what contemporary visual artist-researcher teachers are doing in arts-based research,

with emphasis on female visual artist scholars. Who is doing what in the field?
What is not being done? Finally, how does their work help to establish my niche?

As the Eagle Flies: An Historical Scan of Qualitative Research

The scope and depth of the history and field of qualitative research is prohibitive. A review and recursive discussion over centuries-old traditions of learning is a much larger perspective than this literature review can provide. It was impossible to acknowledge the numerous researchers who account for the evolution of the field, or the numerous researchers who write so eloquently about their own research. However, just as the scope of an eagle-eyed, digital satellite brings swift location in fell swoops to geological sites, such a scan of the history and traditions of qualitative research was helpful in locating current trends and stances of arts-based scholarship and research as they are evolving in the field. This historical review taps major thinkers and synthesizers in the field, but that does not invalidate the important contributions of the many others who contributed to the stunning collage of qualitative research history.

Eisner (1997), Creswell (1998), Coles & Knowles (2007), Denzin & Lincoln (2000/2008), lions in qualitative research, agree that qualitative research is complex in definition, terms and traditions. The separate and multiple uses and meaning of the methods of qualitative research make it difficult for researchers to agree on any essential definition of the field for it is never just one thing. Qualitative research is known by many labels, including descriptive or naturalistic research. The descriptive and naturalistic paradigms go by numerous labels, not limited to postpositivistic, ethnographic, phenomenological, subjective, case study, qualitative, hermeneutic, and humanistic. Writers agree that any attempt to create static definitions and timelines misses the complexity of the evolving field. Nevertheless, qualitative researchers invariably use definitions, timelines and other categorizing methods as a means of organizing the complex information about and contained within qualitative research.

Denzin and Lincoln (2000) provide a perspective of developments and traditions in qualitative research in *The Handbook of Qualitative Research*, a voluminous second edition collection of articles that contextualize qualitative research along overlapping timelines, albeit acknowledging “artificial, socially constructed, quasi-historical overlap of conventions” (p.2). They identified key historical moments (including the future) in a timeline of qualitative research that spans a full century.

The first half resides in positivist paradigms of traditional, statistically-driven methodology and objective reality (Eisner, 1997; Glesne, 1999; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). In positivist research tradition, variables can be identified and relationships are measured. Qualitative research in the field of education in the 1960’s had little saliency, with some exceptions. But battles lines were drawn between qualitative and quantitative. The authors refer to it as a dirty war with increasingly high stakes in maintaining the status quo.

The 1970’s, however, are recognized as a period when genres began to blur and the overall cultural revolution led to a period of post-positivist/postmodern, naturalistic, and constructionist paradigms and practices. It was a period of experimentation in which social sciences, cultural anthropology, ethnography, clinical psychology, historians, writers of all kinds (arts & humanities) experimented with new ethnographies (Eisner, 1997; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000/2008). Qualitative researchers expressed a rising concern for literacy and explored narrative, story-telling as means to compose ethnographies in new ways.

Denzin & Lincoln (2008) produced an equally voluminous third edition Handbook, barely a decade following the second, with an equally dense review,

noting in particular how the field of qualitative research continues to evolve. The recent decades of qualitative research, referred to as an Experimental period, are identified by most as a revolution (Eisner, 1999; Knowles & Cole, 2007; Denzin & Lincoln, 2008) and are concerned with moral discourse and transparency. It is within this development that Richardson (in Denzin & Lincoln, 2000) notes that "all research is now produced within the broader postmodernist climate of doubt" - readers and reviewers want to know how the researcher claims to know. "How does the author position the Self as a knower and teller?"(p. 930).

Traditions and Conventions of Qualitative Research

While a definition of qualitative research is nuanced, it invariably starts with the question - what does it mean to do research? In the simplest of terms, research is the construction of knowledge - about advancing knowledge, however knowledge is defined (Knowles & Cole, 2007). Eisner (in Knowles Handbook, 2007) states the definition of knowledge depends on how inquiry is undertaken and the kind of problem one pursues (p. 4). According to Cole & Knowles (2007), "Knowledge is propositional and generalizable, and research is the process by which knowledge is generated" (p. 59).

A more recent view of knowledge construction is that life is lived and knowledge is made in everyday encounters. Knowledge is constructed through experiencing and processing the world, through living inquiry (Irwin & de Cosson, 2004; Diaz, 2004; Springgay, Irwin, Leggo & Gouzouasis, 2008) to portray certain kinds of knowledge to evoke empathy needed for instigating change, and for providing insight into circumstances that are not best portrayed through statistical and scientific procedures. These moments of meaning-making are not typically

thought of as knowledge. Eisner (2007) notes that the "deliteralization of knowledge is significant in that it opens the door for multiple forms of knowing" (p.5).

At its essence, research systematically builds idea upon idea, theory upon theory - pulling out, lifting up threads of questions, knitting, hooking, weaving, webbing threads of ideas and experiences. Fresh insights are extracted from someone else's labor and insight, someone on whose work we can build or with whom we can agree or disagree. Spreadbury states that research has always been a collective experience, for "academics are in constant conversation with the scholars who have gone before them" (Unpublished dissertation, 2005).

Speaking in Metaphors

Qualitative researchers deploy metaphors in defining qualitative research, an approach Greene (1995) purported as a means to link theory and experience in educational research together in new and dynamic ways. Eisner (1997) portrays research as a knitting/weaving process in which the new researchers hook on to the accumulated work of a previous knitter and in so doing contribute to a huge, ever-expanding net of knowledge. Janesick (in Denzin & Lincoln, 2000) likens qualitative research design to choreography. Metaphoric precision is the central vehicle for revealing the qualitative aspects of life (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Few metaphors are sufficient, however, to imagine the breath, depth and scope of qualitative research itself. As Janesick states, "Metaphor defies a one-size-fits-all approach to a topic" (ibid, p.380).

Metaphors assist not only in portraying the outcomes of their work, but also in capturing and expressing ineffable forms of feeling, multiplicity and dimension of

experience. Visuals artists and writers function in the world of metaphor. Yet Denzin & Lincoln (2000) point out an irony in the professional socialization of educational researchers - the use of metaphor is regarded as a sign of imprecision. Nonetheless, for making the ineffable visible and public, qualitative researchers agree that nothing is more precise than the artistic use of language.

Choice of Genre

How does one find the way to describe what is going on in this world through the medium of qualitative research? The choice of genre for research is determined by the subject matter to be studied. Creswell (1998) identifies five traditions of qualitative research. Traditional qualitative research houses a range of traditional methodologies, including biography (from historians), phenomenology (from psychology and social sciences), grounded theory (from sociology), ethnography (from anthropology), and more recently case studies, (from social, urban studies, and feminist studies). All these different approaches have their purpose. They attempt to answer different questions. As Van Manen states, "The method one chooses ought to maintain a certain harmony with the deep interest that makes one an educator in the first place" (1990, p.2).

Blurring of Genres

The major researchers agree qualitative research now cuts across disciplines, fields and subject matter and that the disciplinary boundaries are blurred (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). The social sciences and humanities have drawn closer together in a mutual focus on an interpretive, qualitative approach to inquiry, research, and theory.

Yet, an over-riding consensus among researchers and historians of qualitative research is that the field was and continues to be rife with tensions and contradictions that operate within the field (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000/2008), originating from its earliest roots in ethnography and anthropology over a century ago. Ethnography and anthropology developed sullied reputations in that research was formed and defined by investigation of the Other, that is, people and cultures that were different than the Western norm. The 'other' began as an exotic, primitive, non-white, foreign culture, judged to be less civilized. Vidich & Lyman (in Denzin & Lincoln, 2000) state that the Other was most typically defined by dominant white males who investigated exotic sites of colonized or non-dominant, non-white cultures.

However, since the 1970's, reflexivity in research has grown again, particularly so in anthropology. Scholarly discourse now includes discussions of forms of common sense that shape everyday life - the practices, texts and representations of culture that circulate and mediate lived experiences (Ellis & Bochner, 1996; Jipson & Paley, et.al, 1997; Bagley & Cancienne, 2002; Irwin & de Cosson, 2004; Diaz, 2004; Springgay et al., 2008). Ellis & Bochner (1996) assert that an interest in reflexivity is a positive aspect of ethnographic research, rather than an undesirable effect to be minimized. Jaeger (1997), Biddle & Locke (2007), and Denzin & Lincoln, (2008) agree that the growth in popularity of qualitative research across disciplines now extracts some of the most interesting dialogues about culture - dialogues that take place outside anthropology, among scholars focusing on media, technology, history, literature, pedagogy and politics.

The Quiet Revolution

The burgeoning publication of research handbooks and texts represents the bubbling and fermenting conversation of qualitative research as researchers encourage and challenge each other regarding conventions of knowledge building and sharing. Qualitative research has become a field of inquiry in its own right (Diaz, 2004; Irwin & deCosson, 2004; Springgay et al., 2008).

Although these trends are not new, researchers agree with Denzin & Lincoln (2008) that the extent to which the “quiet qualitative revolution” has overtaken the social science and related professional fields continues to be “nothing short of amazing” (p.vii.) At the same time, Ellis & Bochner (1996) assume that most of their readers already understand that boundaries between academic disciplines have been dissolving for a long time, exemplified in the recent decade of interdisciplinary educational research. They declare that to a large extent academic departments are only budgetary conveniences for universities and a means of crafting professional identity for faculty (ibid, 1996).

Even though we need to know different things for different reasons, positivist traditions and conventions of research continue to undergird traditions and exert enormous influence in attitudes and challenges of validity and credibility in research. Denzin & Lincoln (2000) point out that despite the revolutionary evolution of knowledge creation and knowledge representation, it is an uneasy crossroad between pragmatism and postmodernism. Culture typically reduces what we have learned to text and number. Knowledge as process, as an impermanent state, is scary to many.

On a methodological level, qualitative research is seen as a philosophy of inquiry that challenges reliance on positivism. Many educational cultures still cling to the valuation of quantifiable knowledge acquired in the most objective methods. That preference poses enormous challenges to methods that do not rely on, nor benefit from quantification or statistical analysis.

The World of Inquiry is Restless

What emerged in this literature review of the history of qualitative research is that the world of inquiry is restless. Art, aesthetics, philosophy, spirituality, ethics, poetics, technology, among other disciplinary threads, have created new and stimulating connections and perspectives that suggest new questions and the need for new methods in educational research. The growing discontent with traditional conceptions of knowledge reflects too much restriction in qualitative research methods. Denzin & Lincoln (2000/2008) agree that the history and field of qualitative research remains discordant even as it presses towards change. The field is still defined primarily by tensions, contradictions and hesitations, by the differences that characterize it. The dysphoria in qualitative research that my students and I experienced is an echo of the field at large.

A Tangle Of Lines

we need a poetic line,
not a prosaic line,
a line that plays with possibilities of
space,
draws attention to itself,
contravenes convention,
will not parade from left to right margins,
back and forth, as if there is
nowhere else
to explore, knows instead lived experience
knows little of linearity
knows the only linearity
we know is the linearity
of the sentence
which waddles across the page like lines of penguins, sentenced by the
sentence
to the lie
of linearity,
chimeric sense of order, born of rhetoric,
and so instead a/r/tographers weave their ways in tangled lines,
know wholeness
in holes and gaps, in fragments
that refract light with fractal abandon, and
savour
the possibilities of prepositions and conjunctions

Carl Leggo, 2008

Literature Review of Arts-Based Research

In the most recent decades of qualitative research, new conversations have emerged for artists and educators in the form of arts-based research. What does it mean to research through arts-based methods? Broadly, the term “arts-based research” is a descriptor of methods in which art may function as methodological enhancement, an instrumental use of art, or where the research process itself is regarded as an art form (Barone & Eisner, 1997; Knowles & Cole, 2001; Bagley & Cancienne, 2002; Diaz, 2004; Irwin & de Cosson, 2004; Sullivan, 2005; Eisner, 2007; Springgay, et al., 2008). The process of researching through arts-based methods is creative and responsive and the representational form may embody elements of various art forms – poetry, fiction, drama, two-and three-dimensional visual art, including photography, film and video, dance, music and multimedia installation (Knowles & Cole, 2001; Sullivan, 2005). Arts-based

research also includes research through expressive communication as in expressive art therapies (Allen, 1995; McNiff, 1998). Given the range of modalities, data production, and expression, there are endless possibilities and devices for the merging of research and art.

Artist-researchers fit ideas into categories even as they seek to shake-up, re-shape and alter the terrain of research paradigms. Arts-based research, like traditional conventions and methodologies of qualitative research, has become sub-divided, parsed and formed into numerous research paradigms. Each paradigm is increasingly particularized with proprietary definitions, methodological forms and political implications and aspirations. The forms and variations are numerous. They include, but are not exclusive to: "Aesthetic-informed research", "arts-informed research", "learning in and through the arts", "research-based art", "artist/researcher/teacher", "a/r/tography", "autoethnography", "participatory action research", "expressive arts therapy", "image-based research", "visual representation in ethnography", "aesthetic research", "performative social science research methods", "living inquiry", "practice-led research", "art as research", "research as art."

Arts-based research, as qualitative research, strives towards meaning-making and an effort to engender a sense of empathy (Knowles & Cole, 2007). Even though arts-based research clusters are increasingly differentiated by an admixture of terms and overlapping identifiers that are not necessarily interchangeable, they share a common drive to extend the boundaries and practices of arts-based research. Differing assumptions and emphases on ideas is not surprising given the complex experiences and perspectives of artists, educators and researchers. All the different approaches of arts-based research have their purpose as they attempt to answer different questions.

For example, Allen (1995) and McNiff (1998) established arts-based research in a therapeutic context through methods of expressive therapy, utilizing a wide range of art mediums (that might include visual arts, movement, drama, creative writing, and/or storytelling). McNiff (2008) defines arts-based research as the “systematic use of the artistic process, the actual making of artistic expressions in all of the different forms of the arts, as a primary way of understanding and examining experience by both researchers and the people that they involved in their studies” (p.29). Drawing from post-modernist philosophical and educational theories to situate and validate knowledge gained through expressive art engagement, McNiff (1998) extrapolates concepts from expressive arts-based therapy to arts-based research for educators, with particular pursuit of studying the personal expression of educators and learners as a valid means gathering knowledge. However, Irwin (2004), from the perspective of an artist/teacher/researcher, acknowledges the value of McNiff’s arts-based research for art therapists, but asserts that the approach is unable and insufficient to meet the needs of researchers wishing to integrate the visual arts into educational research methods.

Arts-based research practices are driven by wide ranges of artist-researcher backgrounds. Each artist-researcher is positioned somewhat differently in the art and educational worlds. This results in the benefit of numerous, rich perspectives upon which to draw, while simultaneously generating efforts to increasingly different, if not competing agendas or outcomes. This may explain in part the multiplicity of interpretations and extensions of arts-based research. Each variety of knowing bears its own fruits and has its own uses. Even Eisner, a lion in qualitative and art-based research, is viewed by Sullivan as characteristically language-based, structuralist and essentialist in methodology,

thereby not extending into the newest calls for studio-based methodologies for educational research (2005).

Delineation of identities may have unintended outcomes. Particularization may delimit the good intentions of qualitative research, which is to increase our empathy, expand our engagement and participation, not to sort and divide. Delineation provides affinities, professional homes, and identities but it can also force us to choose identities and affinities and to take sides. Hence, from this perspective, the qualitative wars, extended into arts-based research, are continued and perpetuated.

Expanding Forms of Art-based Research

Research methodologies such as living inquiry, practice-led research, artist-teacher research, and autoethnography emerged out of restlessness and disenfranchisement of artist/educators who chafe against the limitations of the traditions and conventions of qualitative research methods (Paley, 1995; Ellis/Bochner, 1996; Jipson & Paley et al., 1997; Bagley & Cancienne, et al., 2002; Irwin, et al., 2004; Springgay, et al., 2008). Numerous authors rebuff what research seems to demand of educators and artists. The language of traditional qualitative research is experienced as defensive, aggressive and contemptuous of ideas such as wisdom, generosity, silence, liminality, unknowing, love, and faith - words viewed with suspicion and contempt in the Academy (Irwin et al., 2004; Springgay et al., 2008). When work cannot be accessed through conventional criteria, there is a tendency to dismiss it because it does not model traditional canons. Arts-based researchers are attempting to redefine those canons and convince the Academy to validate and include non-conventional forms of data representation.

The newest ground of qualitative research includes recursive, reflexive, arts-based methods in ever-expanding ripples of experiential and experiential approaches (Ellis/Bochner, 1996). Increasingly, arts-based researchers are undertaking research outside of the Academy, in community and personal settings, where false distinctions created between the personal and the professional fall away - the 'academy of the kitchen table', the community center, boarding houses, art museum, skateboard park (Paley, 1995; Ellis/Bochner, 1996; Jipson & Paley et al., 1997; Irwin et al., 2004; Springgay et al., 2008).

Paley (1995) and Jipson & Paley et al. (1997) were heralds in early experimentation with art, education and culture in research outside of school settings. Paley's *Finding Art's Place* portrays ground-breaking experiments that provide representations and self-representations of children and young adults who are striving to find a place for art in their lives and to participate and contribute to the making of their culture (1995). Jipson & Paley in *Daredevil Research* transgressed mainstream academia by experimenting with wide-ranging social and personal content and alternative forms of representation (1997). Recognizing that the expressiveness and unpredictability of imagination generates tension within the Academy, each of these authors nevertheless disturbed the landscape while simultaneously reframing questions about critical thinking, knowledge creation, and non-analytical rendering of self and other. In the intervening years, numerous artists have generated a diverse range of research derived from image-based exploration. Fast-forwarding to the present, in *Practice as Research: Approaches to Creative Arts Enquiry*, Barrett & Bolt et al. (2009) advance compelling explanations of emergent process and reflexivity as both aspects and strengths of the subjective dimension in studio-based research.

They assert studio-based enquiry as a method that unfolds through practice, and that practice, itself, produces knowledge and engenders further practice with a text suitable for research curriculum.

The Other may now be one's Self. The emergence of new perspectives in qualitative research both challenge and augment possibilities of inquiry through methods that value image-making and new forms of ethnography, including, self-study (MacIntyre Latta, 2001; Diaz, 2004; Vaughn, 2005; Irwin, 2008; Springgay, 2008). Increasingly, this development has pushed beyond conventional formulations of research and has linked the construction of research knowledge to alternative models of representation including performance art, personal conversation, nonobjective artistic practice, asignifying presentation, journal entry, dream narrative, deep subjectivity, and fictional production. Jipson & Paley (1997) state:

As forms of this newer kind of practice continue to erupt in multiple ways, in multiple locations, for multiple reasons, inside and outside the grids of defined research categories, the sphere of scholarly inquiry has become an extraordinarily animated site for a diverse and experimental analytic production by a number of thinkers not hesitant to situate inquiry in a vast epistemological space. (p. 3)

Visual Artists, Scholarship and Research

The distinction between an artist and an author of qualitative research is, for me, blurred but compatible. However, that is an arguable stance within art and educational communities. An over-riding observation from this literature review is that significant strides and experimentation in arts-based research are occurring outside of the United States. Arts-based discourse and research is vibrant in coalitions of theorists and practitioners from Europe, the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand (Sullivan, 2005; Barrett & Bolt, 2009). Sullivan (2005) credits this to "government funding and legislated change to institutional structures which resulted in unintended but generative debate

about the value of visual arts as an academic discipline and ways of conceptualizing studio inquiry as a form of research" (p. 82).

The Academy within the United States, however, remains ambivalent about arts-based research and the role of the artist in higher education. The juxtaposition of artist as researcher troubles the Academy along numerous lines. According to Sullivan (2005), art as subject and object is well-studied. Scholars agree, however, that studio practice and art processes are studied less well, poorly defined and easily dismissed as a site and means of knowledge creation (Diaz, 2004; Fordon, 2004; Irwin et al. 2004; Sullivan, 2005; Springgay et al., 2008). The Academy is the privileged source and site of knowledge, discovered and created by intellectuals - researchers and theorists. Knowledge is held by them until its implications are determined and sanctioned for dissemination through traditional academic and public auspices. Echoing the discourse within the qualitative wars, Sullivan (2005) states: "The hegemony of the sciences and the rationality of progress make it difficult for the visual arts to be seen as reliable sources of insight and understanding" (p.23).

The cultural and social significance of art is also grossly undervalued (Eisner, 1997; Diaz, 2004; Sullivan, 2005; Hetland & Winner, 2007). Scholars agree that even when the arts are included in schools and institutions of higher education, visual arts programs struggle for acceptance as important areas of the curriculum and are among the first to be eliminated under budgetary constraints. More specifically, "Visual arts remain mostly sequestered within a limited cultural and political orbit. At worst they are seen as elitist; at best, visual arts are misunderstood" (Sullivan, 2005; Hetland & Winner et al., 2007). Arts-based, practice-led research also challenges practicing artists who value the fine-

arts practice of art-making for its own sake or where research processes and analysis are viewed as impediments or irrelevant to creative process.

Nudging Opposites Closer Together

An increasing number of artist-educator researchers are picking up the challenge of suggested irreconcilability between artistic practice and scholarly research by pushing researchers to think more like artists and for artists to think more like researchers (Ellis & Bochner, 1996; Diaz, 2002; Slattery & Langerook, 2002; Vaughn, 2005). Diaz (2002) states “the processes of artistic creation and scientific inquiry are similar in many ways, yet at the same time they rest in distinct discursive discourse maintained as separate and inequitable” (p.148). Sullivan (2005) continues Eisner's drumbeat for the importance of visual arts as an agency of human knowing in calling for “a broader conception of inquiry – one that is based on creative and critical perspectives” (p. 34). Educators and qualitative researchers are being pushed to ask new questions and to think differently about how to ask questions (Sullivan, 2005).

Sullivan encourages an approach to examine visual arts as a form of inquiry into the theories, practices and contexts used by artists. The artist makes art to see things anew, to make people see the familiar in a new way. The critical and creative investigations where artists work are forms of research grounded in art practice. Sullivan (2008) asserts that “artists, as much as social scientists, are making headway in re-fashioning ways of envisioning who we are and what we do” (p. 236.)

Geichman and Fox (2001) further assert that contemporary art can induce generative disorientation through defamiliarization. Contemporary art, by virtue

of its strangeness, unfamiliarity, and highly personalized processes can suggest and invoke greater openness to what we consider educational experience (Stake & Kerr, 1995; Fox & Geichman, 2001) by invoking more shock, deeper conflict, and greater variety in the questions being asked in the classroom and in educational research.

Advancing Dewey's declaration that the purpose of art is to defamiliarize the familiar (1934), Geichman & Fox (2001) state that a function of art in modern conversation must be to expand art processes and perspectives into the conventions of qualitative research in such a way as to disorient and redirect reigning perspectives in educational research and educational practice. Geichman & Fox (2001) further assert that contemporary art provides strategies and perspectives that suggest new questions for educational research in that "approaches used effectively in contemporary art and educational research may be effective with each because they inhabit a similar context at the turn of the twenty-first century" (p.34).

Emerging Forms of Art-based Research

Going forward, the review identifies emerging forms and artists related to artist-teacher research. It is impossible for this literature review to account for the full range of prolific and generative portrayals of artist-teacher researchers that are now available. Once again, that does not invalidate the important contributions of the many others who are contributing to the growing collage of artist-teacher research.

A/r/tography

An example of emerging identity in art-based research is that of artist-researcher teacher through a defined, articulated identity of a/r/tography - a form of representation that privileges both text and image as they meet within moments of metissage (Irwin et al., 2004; Springgay, et al., 2008). Metissage in a/r/tography is appropriated from the French term for mixed race in European colonialist populations (Aldrich, 1999) and, as such, provides a socio-cultural perspective of autobiography-ethnography for artist-teacher researchers (Irwin, 2000). The concept of metissage positions a/r/tography as a site for writing and surviving in the interval between different cultures and languages, a way of merging and blurring genres, male and female, texts and identities. It is a language of borderlands; an active literary stance, a political strategy, and pedagogical praxis (Aldrich, 1999; Irwin et al., 2000/2004; Springgay et al., 2008). A/r/tography emerges out of a liminal space of practice and alternative identity (Pryer in Irwin, 2002). Irwin (2004) claims a/r/tography, at its core, has been with us a long time but “what is different now is a declared identity, and with identity comes a chance to articulate what that identity has come to mean for many people” (p.71).

Graphical Identity and Meaning-Making

In privileging text and image, a/r/tographers leverage hyphens, dashes, slashes and spaces within English writing mechanics to create graphical representations in the artist-teacher-researcher identity and research experience. Graphical languaging is used to communicate and represent the space between one role and others as spaces of possibility and sites of radical openness (Pryer in Irwin, 2004, p.21). Most obvious are the identities that comprise the lives of artist-

researcher teachers indicated by hyphens and also by slashes in the noun “a/r/tographer” (Irwin, 2004). Art, research and teaching contain parts of each other and, in praxis, form an “aesthetic synthesis” (Pearse in Irwin, 2004, p. 21). As a visual heuristic, graphical texture creates a strategy for expressive, interruptive and disruptive energies that cannot be systematized and objectified (Paley, 1995). Hyphens, dashes, slashes and spaces graphically represent the in-between and luminal spaces, the third space between, collaged lives and experiences, and processes of deep and complex inquiry of artist-teacher-researchers (deCosson, 2000; Pente in Irwin, 2004). When talking of the spaces between artist-teacher-researcher, Irwin (2004) says, “It is in that living space in-between that we are residing. We are alive in movement, in the intertextuality of visual and written texts” (p.202).

“The political, cultural and social positioning of all these artist/research/teachers, their consciously chosen non-fixity of identity, and the heightened awareness and simultaneous disregard for institutional frameworks and boundaries, marks them as marginal to mainstream artistic, academic, and pedagogical practice” (p.22).

Living Inquiry

Not all artist-teacher researchers claim identity with a/r/tography but conduct artist-teacher research nonetheless. Artist-teacher researchers embed the practice of living inquiry in and through the arts in diverse and divergent ways. While our society commonly locates knowledge as dwelling beyond the realm of the everyday, artist-teacher researchers use their own artistic practices as primary or complimentary practices to other forms of inquiry. However, image is an integral component of the inquiry process. Each engages with their art and practice, art and text, self and other, artist and teacher, focusing on the spaces between theory and practice.

The emergence of new perspectives in qualitative research both challenge and augment possibilities of inquiry through methods that value image-making and new forms of ethnography, including self-study (MacIntyre Latta, 2001; Diaz, 2004; Vaughn, 2005; Irwin, et al., 2008; Springgay et al., 2008). Many of the artist-teacher researchers play with their marginal identities in their subject matter as well as their practice (Irwin, et al. 2004), exploring the depth, shadows and responsibilities such new connections create. Self-study practice creates profound possibilities for generating new connections. *A/r/tography* provokes questioning, wondering, and wandering that brackets the everyday and the conventional as artist-teacher researchers study and perform knowledge, teaching, and "to see themselves, and art, as if for the first time" (Smith in Irwin 2004, p.23).

Rendering Self

Rendering self is a meaning-making process implicit in artist-teacher research practice. Artist-teacher researchers draw from Dewey's 1934 conception of simultaneous continuity and interaction of experience through experiencing and portraying living and moving forces that interplay with past and present situations and interactions. In *a/r/tography*, Irwin & de Cosson et al. (2004) delve into the process of rendering self through attention to memory, identity, reflection, mediation, storytelling, interpretation, and reinterpretation in their living practices. Artist-teacher research, as living inquiry, is concerned with self- and human-study. Each are potentially as complex, generative, curious, conflicted, nuanced, dark, particular, transitory, changeable, enduring, and hopeful as the other (Paley, 1995; Hubbard & Power, 1999; Bagley & Cancienne et al., 2002, MacIntyre Latta, 2001).

In *Being with A/r/tography*, Springgay (2004) states, "I am always artist" while embracing complexity and otherness in aesthetic creation (p.11). de Cosson (2004) explores his discomfort with the researcher identity in "a hermeneutic dialog of finding patterns in the aporia of artist/teacher/researcher" (p. 127). MacIntyre Latta (2001) explores the role and place of fear in what it means to teach and learn. Pryer (in Irwin & deCosson, 2004) explores intellectual nomadism and artist/researcher/teacher practice. Wilson (in Irwin, 2004) explores and manages the fluidity of self, grief, death, fragments, and darkness through the medium of quilting and narrative. Central and common within these (and numerous other) diverse subjects and multiple forms of blurred genres is that self is rendered through search and re-search, and always through image. Springgay (2004) states "art allows us to have the direct experience of being in multiple places at once, feeling multiple emotions, and holding contradictory opinions" (p.11).

The Female Voice

Artist-teacher research as inquiry opens the way to describe the complexity of experience not only among researchers, artists and educators but also the lives of the individuals and communities with whom they interact. As a result, artist-teacher research practice has the possibility to privilege voices and cultures not well represented in traditional research forms, including female/feminist voices and forms of representation. While hooks (1997) recognized that feminist and critical pedagogy are two alternative paradigms for teaching which have emphasized the issue of coming to voice, artist-teacher research inquiry provides a means to open the worlds of female experience in a wide range of cultures. Artist-teacher researchers argue for the need to increase research approaches to portray lives and communities not portrayed in the scientific community - communities with particular problematics, voices, values and experiences

differing from intellectual pursuits. The experimental work of Sadie Benning (in Paley, 1995) was an early representation of the unfamiliar world of female teenage development and angst. Springgay (2007) provides similarly evocative female research in which Watt disrupts mass media perceptions of veiling and Muslim dress. Jolly analyses the medicalization of modern birth. Springgay explores intimacy in Janinine Antoni's provocative artwork.

Nonobjective Artistic Practices

A common thread in the literature review of artist-teacher researchers is an imperative to maintain nonobjective artistic practices - artistic modes of representation and different approaches to critical inquiry without categorizing, naming and systematizing - groundwork laid by Paley's (1995) early experimentation. Artist-teacher researchers resist positivist analytic objectification by merging educational thinking with artistic practice in a most open way possible that includes bricolage and rhizomatic conceptualizations and polyphonic voices (Paley, 1995).

Bricolage and the rhizomatic serve as strategic, non-compartmentalized, un-centered, methodological approaches to recode literary and visual experience in art-based research - conceptualizations with no orienting centers (Paley, 1995; Irwin et al., 2004; Springgay et al., 2008), invoking images of animal boroughs, bamboo plants, iris roots, ginger plants. Paley describes a rhizome as a virtually endless, complex, densely connected series of structures and inter-structures with multiple entrances, intersections, galleries, dead ends, entangled crossroads. The rhizomatic was conceptualized by Deleuze and Guattari (1986) as a way of avoiding reductive analysis, by entering the complexity of Franz Kafka's writing and art as a burrow or a rhizome, "not to explain or determine absolute meaning of his work, but rather to open up new ways of extracting

intensities, tonalities and energy" (p. 11). Arts-based researchers similarly privilege all entrances to their work to discover connections, new meanings, linkages between points, the map of the rhizome, and how the map may be modified by entrance from any particular point (Paley, 1995; Irwin, 2000; Springgay, 2000).

Bricolage, too, provides an alternative to compartmentalizing systems of knowledge production/display (Paley 1995). Bricolage is characterized in large part by "discontinuity, juxtaposition in overall form, and by a de-centered, porous association among its discontinuous parts" (Paley, 1995, p.9). Bricolage provides for the possibility of creating a text in/between in a no/space and an every/place where images can shift from topic to topic. Bricolage entertains the idea of "a sphere whose center is everywhere and periphery nowhere and which demands a high level of participation without goal and direction. As such, "bricolage serves mechanics of imagination rather than doctrinal concerns" (Paley, 1995, p.10).

Deleuze and Guattari (1986) assert that only the principle of multiple entrances prevents the impulse to name and categorize and attempts to interpret work that is actually only open to experimentation. Deleuze and Guattari (1986) further assert that inquiry about the nature of a thing can free the form from restricting belief systems - of assembling explanations of the meaning in relation to a given theory, thereby avoiding analytic categorizations.

Maintaining such indeterminacy in art serves unregulated forces rather than forces that smooth out experience into normalized, objectified, analytic arrangements (Paley, 1995; Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). This stance runs against

disciplined analytic practice. As hooks (1996) reminds us, in refusing the centre, one chooses “the margin as a site of radical openness” (p.48).

Body Knowledge and Embodiment

In response to the discipline and disappearance of the body in Western educational traditions, some artist-teacher researchers centralize the body as a subject of meaning-making. Bagley & Cancienne et al. (2002) move beyond established traditions and locate the body as a site of data gathering and meaning-making. Snowber (in Bagley & Cancienne, 2002) explores the relationship between dance improvisation, bodily knowing and performative inquiry through “lived-curriculum” as opposed to “curriculum-as-plan” (p. 21). Springgay (2008) and Snowber (2002) welcome and celebrate materiality and sensuality through the body, problematizing what it means to interface body with curriculum. MacIntyre Latta (2001) explores the body’s role with teaching and learning with the assumption that embodiment is elemental to human beings and that disconnection and disembodiment are a complication and impediment within education. Springgay (2008) poses the question of how the body as meaning, rather than the container of meaning, disrupts normative assumptions and dualistic thought. Central to the theme of embodied knowing, rather than projective knowing, is that body is a vital site of knowledge and data in living inquiry, whether as object or metaphor.

An Aesthetic Way of Knowing

An infused, or at times, a central theme in artist-teacher research is attention to aesthetics as a way of knowing. In comparing, contrasting, liking, disliking, making judgments, interpreting from experience, artist-teachers entertain new

possibilities for knowing the world through active engagement. Artist-teacher researchers agree that the value is less on the actual art product and more on the experience of making the art (MacIntyre Latta, 2001; Diaz, 2004).

Greene (in Diaz & McKenna, 2004) refers to the aesthetic as perceptual journeys - "pursuit of more and more unexplored perspectives, for attentiveness to all sorts of forms in their concreteness and particularity" (p. 25). However, McKenna (2004) further asserts that "perception must be charged with an emotional tone if we are to draw any meaning from the experience" (p.54). Diaz (2004) asserts that aesthetics is fundamental to critical thinking, occupying both a transcendent and everyday function in life. Through aesthetic awareness, we are led to apprehend the qualities and meaning of artworks through direct experience, which Diaz (2004) states "involves a sensuous awareness of the physical context and an intrinsic delight with specific actions, along with a desire for joyful meaning, and a need to feel gratitude for the whole process" (p.85). In this respect, the aesthetic experience is akin to the experience of embodiment (Snowber in Diaz & McKenna, 2003), contrasted with what Greene describes as passive, awe-struck approaches and mastery of traditional art appreciation common to traditional study or museum appreciation (2004).

Artist-teacher researchers variously describe how aesthetic sensitivity fosters an experience of connection in life, harkening to the binding/connecting function between collage parts and pieces of a thing or experience. Donovan (2004) states that aesthetics foster connections for engaged students - connecting students with each other, to their own meaning-making and to life beyond the moment. Through aesthetic awareness, Diaz (2004) calls for reintegration of the body and mind, spirit and intellect, arts and education - things that culture and

individuals separate within and without - as a means of creating authenticity through connection.

Snowber (in Diaz & McKenna, 2004) describes how making and viewing art leads one into aesthetic experience, but it also happens in reverse. Living attentively in the world, eyes wide open, heart expansive, can lead one into a kind of perceiving that deepens our aesthetic experience of the world. This experience begs for form, and we are far more open to the emergence of curriculum of artistic expression.

Forms and Methods of Artist-Teacher Research

Collage and Assemblage

Qualitative researchers have identified collage and assemblage as a method to evoke new ways of knowing in postmodern, postcolonial manuscript (Ellis & Bochner, 1996; Biddle & Locke, 2007). Collage is a fine arts practice with a postmodern epistemology based on the idea of spontaneously layering images and symbols (MacIntyre Latta, 2001; Diaz, 2002; Vaughn, 2005) through which traditions and experiences can be reinterpreted and connections can be forged between the seemingly random or disparate (Joseph Cornell Retrospective, Peabody-Essex Museum, 2007). Museum curator of the Cornell Retrospective, Hartigan (2007) identified collage principles as central to the modern concept of creativity as the idealism and recombination of ideas.

A collagist method brings things together while simultaneously recognizing the separateness of parts and pieces. MacIntyre Latta (2001) explores lingering in-between tensions, conversations and sites of experience. Diaz (in Bagley &

Cancienne, 2002) created collage as a "double stage effect" of the visual and the discursive through an overlay of text/images that promotes "a drama of two realities enacting on two levels of experience (p.148). Vaughn (2005) used collage as a model for interdisciplinary research to give equal weight to visual and linguistic processes while exploring collage methodology and epistemology. In the creation of *Unwearables*, Vaughn embraces a collagist methodology in which each component of her interdisciplinary work is embodied not simply described, in that the art products reflect, reveal, and document the process of their own creation.

Collage is further exemplified in numerous contributors to *Composing Ethnography: Alternative Forms of Qualitative Writing* (Ellis & Bochner, 1996) and *Dancing the Data* (Bagley & Cancienne, 2002). The results are a range of writing that experiments with various textual forms in order to deliberately push the boundary on conventions for disciplinary texts. The content is provided in a wide range of non-traditional sociological writing.

Performative

The new and different forms of the arts disrupt the mono, one-voice nature of research. Bagley & Cancienne et al. (2002) in *Dancing the Data* embrace intertextual forms of representation through visual and performing arts with educational research to open up new conversations between artists, educators and researchers. The text, the accompanying words and movement make data presentable and discernible in a way that cannot be achieved by more bounded representational forms. An accompanying CD-ROM presents new ways of knowing, learning and teaching. The use of multimedia augments and cross-fertilizes representational genres, thereby generating new conversations.

Jenoure (in Bagley & Cancienne, 2002) describes how, as a performance artist, the process of creating an art piece and research are both/and experience as she moves in and out of sensual, spiritual and cognitive realms. Also as an example of embodiment, Jenoure describes this as moving inside and outside of her body almost instantaneously and she experiences the work through different lenses, constantly scrutinizing her work from every angle (as cited in Bagley & Cancienne, 2002).

Autoethnographic

Duncan (2004) and Smith (2005) explore autoethnography as an alternative form of qualitative writing. Autoethnography provides a means of inquiry outside the conventions of traditional qualitative research which Ellis and Bochner (1996) portray as a “new ethnography” that appeals to those who feel marginalized by the conventions of positivist and traditional social science research. Autoethnography allowed Smith’s self-participation in a study of acquired brain injury (2005). An autoethnographic approach supported Duncan’s self-directed approach to developing hypermedia educational resources (2004). Neuman (in Ellis & Bochner, 1996) also claims autoethnography is a “form of critique and resistance that can be found in diverse literatures such as ethnic autobiography, fiction, memoir, and texts that identify zones of contact, conquest, and the contested meanings of self and culture that accompanies the exercise of representational authority” (p.191). Richardson (in Ellis & Bochner, 1996) expresses “renewed appreciation for self-expression in interpretive communities where academic conventions have constrained rather than enabled the representation of subjective experience” (p. 193). “As a term of textual analysis, autoethnography reminds us that ethnography – like other forms of cultural representation – matters deeply in the lives of others who find themselves portrayed in texts not of their own making” (Neuman in Ellis & Bochner, 1994,

p.191). Neuman (in Ellis and Bochner, 1994) claims that autoethnography stands as a attempt to come to terms with sustaining questions of self and culture - as “a discursive activity that finds its bearing, practice, and value as a response to the ambiguities of a particular cultural and historical culture” (p.193).

What Can We Learn From the Visual Artist?

What this literature review reveals is that research methods that draw from the long history of anthropology and sociology do not fully satisfy the interests and concerns of visual arts researchers (Irwin & de Cosson, 2004; Sullivan 2005; Springgay, 2008; Barrett & Bolt, 2009). Anthropological and sociological traditions emphasize the researcher as “editor” rather than artistic “practitioner”, tilting towards critique and analysis of phenomena, with little to say about the creation of new knowledge using visual means. However, as these (and other) artist-teacher researchers are showing, informative theories and practices are being found in the art studio through the artist-theorist as practitioner. Visual artists, building on traditions of social critique, make use of all manner of circumstances, settings, and technologies to ask questions that might affect the way people think, feel, and act as a result of their encounters with art (Sullivan, 2005).

Meaning is not merely an outcome of reduplicative analysis or thematic synthesis in artist-teacher research. Rather, effective research is more of a Rilke experience (1934) that increases opportunities to raise better questions that not only seek to add information to our store of knowledge by helping come to understand what we do not know, but simultaneously requires us to problematize what we do know. Artist-teacher researchers seek alternative means to conventional classification of phenomena which uses empirically based

conceptual frameworks to categorize things. Drawing upon the analogous, connecting function of collage, art-based researchers envision interconnectedness where criteria is used to identify relationships among entities of interest, rather than a tendency to separate things into typologies and hierarchies.

Reflexivity

The problematic nature of how artist-teacher researchers knowingly or unknowingly interpret images in the construction of meaning however, is an issue of ongoing debate (Sullivan, 2005). Reflexivity was a construct initially identified in feminist discourse, linked to the notion that positions are discursively and interactively constituted and are open to shifts and changes as the discourse shifts or as one's positioning within or in relation to that discourse shifts (Sullivan 2005). In other words, one's stance can change based upon experience (MacIntyre Latta, 2001; Diaz, 2002). Sarah Pink (in Sullivan, 2005) argues that reflexivity can be a conceptual asset in revealing information, but also an operational liability that can raise concerns about issues such as ethics.

Research and Politics

Ultimately, what should count as research leads to a very deep agenda. Issues of epistemology have political ramifications as well as intellectual ones. (Eisner, 1988; Jipson & Paley, 1997; Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). Over a decade ago, Jipson and Paley (1997) recognized that the "ideological and personal dare" (p.14) in producing independent research is a tight-wire activity that involves risk which implies, in no small part, changes in power relations. Not all forms of data are considered legitimate research, even though as Eisner, has

repeatedly declared in various ways over the decades, “Forms of data are as old as the hills; they are just new to research” (1997, p.5). Research is an agenda with high stakes in that it pertains to matters of legitimacy, authority, and ultimately resides with whoever possesses the power to publish and promote. Attesting to the on-going conservative nature of the Academy, Barone and Eisner (1997) note that useful non-science-based texts are still not regarded as research.

The quiet research revolution is met with resistance in other ways. Politics drives the paradigm of the times. In many quarters, a resurgent, scientifically based research paradigm has gained the upper hand. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2008), interpretive methods are read as unscientific and unsuitable for use by those who legislate social policy. Borrowing from the field of biomedical research, the National Research Council (NRC) appropriated neopositivist, evidence-based epistemologies (exemplified in *No Child Left Behind*) which embodies a re-emergent scientism in which well-defined causal models and independent and dependent variables have created a hostile political environment for qualitative research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008, p.11).

What is My Niche in This Field?

The literature review provides a context to understand my students' and my dysphoria and conflict in research. The entire field, for an entire century, is defined by constant churning, yawning struggle and inspiration to manifest knowledge for a society that, too, demonstrates growth at unprecedented rates. Sadly, in the American Academy and American culture, arts and education are not valued sufficiently to match the growth and investment in other disciplines. American colleges and universities have increasingly become pragmatic places

where students train to get jobs rather than to obtain educations (Berg,2004), sharpened in the most recent months of world-wide economic crisis. Colleges are increasingly test-marketing "no-frills" programs and online delivery to defray the increasing cost of higher education. Education research and learning through the arts would seem to be even more threatened in the current political and economic climates.

The research debates bring us to the edges of discourse about representation and cognition. One of the ideals of conventional social science and quantitative research is to reduce ambiguity and increase precision. Traditional qualitative research is about asking good questions and finding the best genre and method to find answers to one's questions, to find clues and explanations to minimize or eliminate competing explanations, rival hypothesis, or personal judgment and emotional content. However, as this literature review acknowledges, many alternative forms of data representation do not provide that kind of precision or comfort. Practice-led research contrasts with research cultures that value the efficiency of numbers, statistics and quantifiable, comparable facts and figures.

Additionally, the arts are forms that generate emotion. That is their strength and hindrance in artist-teacher research practice. In the end, Eisner summates, that ironically, good research complicates our lives. Can we as educators, together with our students, tolerate the increasing tension of our modern life and 'live the questions' toward meaningful understanding and answers without immediate gratification or soothing, comforting answers?

I am heartened that the literature indicates the field is shifting. The research field is moved slowly and inevitably by those who imagine new possibilities and who persuade colleagues of their utility (Barone & Eisner, 1997). Artist-teacher

researchers, with whom I identify, must gradually persuade colleagues of the value and utility of the new lenses for viewing previously unnoticed educational phenomena, forms of data that are unable to be captured and displayed within a numerical symbol system. The knowledge that artists acquire/construct from their wide-ranging practices is increasingly recognized as valuable and credible in the larger field of education, especially in the education of adult learners. This literature review indicates that artists can provide a valuable perspective to educators of adult learners. The literature review provides evidence that there are evolving conversations and conventions in qualitative research in response to a need to portray sociological realities of cultures that may not be well represented through traditional conventions of research. There is evidence of increasing interest in conventions of research that portray meaning-making and the process of an experience through a wide range of research methods. I am hopeful that arts-based educational research using visual arts could reduce the disenfranchisement and disconnection in educational research felt by adult students in their education. Artists provide valuable information on how transformational learning can be fostered given the variables of learning contexts, learners, and educators.

From the perspective of artist-teacher researchers, art is more than a personal rite of passage of personal discovery. Living inquiry, as an arts-based approach to research, is a fluid, generative, heuristic enterprise – a non-linear, rhythmic circularity of the creative, non-linear artist-teacher research journey. The artist-teacher researcher explores truths that prevail, even as the contextual, political, and sociological dimensions of learning and inquiry realign truths in new ways. When we understand this resonance in terms of how we create, teach, and inquire alongside one another, we recognize the incalculable abundance of our personal and collective capacity to effect change. More research is indicated to

provide as broad a perspective as there are experiences from studio-based learning.

Literature Review of Transformational Learning

My doctoral study on the phenomena of transformation is a means by which I am making the archetype of transformation more conscious, not only for my own individuation and professional development, but also, as a contribution to adult learners and as a means to increase quality and development of Self (Jung, 1969) in adult learner education. My study of transformational learning with adult students is situated in the context of their socio-cultural experiences, self-perceptions, and the influences of their learning experiences. It is a primary objective in this literature review to increase our understanding of realities and factors in transformation, that is, of deep paradigmatic change, into clearer understanding and practical usage for the adult learner and educator.

Educators, however, disagree on the value and need for transformational learning, and not all students seek transforming experiences (Cranton, 1997; Taylor, 1998; Mezirow, 2000). Many adult learning contexts do not necessarily lend themselves to transformational learning, and transformational learning is not the only goal of education (Cranton, 1997; Taylor, 1998). Some programs of study are less conducive to transformational learning than others. Additionally, not all learners and educators are predisposed to engage in transformational learning. Despite recent decades of development in adult learning, many administrators and faculty function out of what they know best - a traditional academic and administrative paradigm - lacking sufficient understanding of adult learning theory, constructivist learning, and how to facilitate transformational learning in the classroom (Taylor, 1998). Increasing economic delimitations and the prodigious use of field practitioners as adjunct faculty complicate the challenge of transformational learning.

Through my own teaching experience, and that of educators in my institution, I witness the value and challenges of transformational learning across a range of disciplines. How can transformational learning best be fostered, given the variables of learning contexts, learners, and educators (Taylor, 1998)?

What is Transformation?

While there is a plethora of cultural interest in transformation, there is, however, much less literature that provides a definitive working definition of transformation because it is a phenomenon, and as such, it is more amenable to description than definition. The same could be said about the phenomenon of transformation that Tisdell (2003) says of spirituality: “It seems to defy definition, or at the very least, all definitions of it seem to be inadequate” (p.xi).

The phenomenon of transformation is perhaps better known by descriptions of its effect, such as is experienced with poetry, art, symbols, and music, rather than by definitions. Descriptions engage our imagination and our affect, while definitions engage our intellect. Additionally, Creswell (1998) points out that subjects of phenomenology are better suited to descriptive methods of research. But this leaves our understanding of transformation at risk for suffering from cultural popularism and subjectivity, and possible dilution of meaning and power.

My Personal Grounding in Transformation

I conducted research with the concept of transformation grounded, as a way of knowing, in the archetypal psychology of Carl Jung in which the unconscious of the individual and of culture is recognized as an aspect of the consciousness of both. In *The Archetypes and The Collective Unconscious* (1969), Jung spoke of

transformation in what may be described as mythical, archetypal, psychological, and spiritual language that differentiates transformation into subjective, transcendent experiences of rebirth, contextualized in both internal and external cultures.

According to Jung, the psyche is the starting point of all human experience, and all knowledge we gain eventually leads back to it - the psyche is the beginning and end of all cognition (Jung, *Collected Works*, 1969). Jung (1969) declared that for true learning to occur, the affective realms must be engaged.

Jung's studies and work led him to conclude that the unconscious is the real source of all our human consciousness. Depth psychology, as an academic discipline, is sourced by a long lineage of individuals who look and listen with metaphoric sensibility to the subtleties of human experience (Jung Institute Summer Seminars, 2007). Jung's work inspires a stream of discourse on multiple ways of knowing in the context of transformation among scholar-practitioners who pay particular attention to the role of the unconscious, the mythic, and the spiritual (Yorks & Kasl, 2006). This attention was recently re-sparked with publication of Jung's *Red Book*, (2009), the original writings of Jung's self-experimentation with active imagination.

Jung, however, is frequently resisted in higher education because his work is viewed as mystical, psychological, and spiritual. Transformation is often associated with spirituality because of the growth and change that individuals can undergo in their experience of spirituality (Tisdell, 2003). These associations create challenges in academic circles where value is placed on behavioral, structural learning theory (Piaget, 1950; Erickson, 1959) and on traditional methods of learning in the classroom. Through Freud and Piaget, the structure

of learning is set. Biology is given and all we are adding is details. I began to feel that I needed additional frames of reference for my exploration of transformational learning with adult learners.

Transformative Learning Theory Was a Bridge

A theme that consistently runs through the literature review on the theories and concepts of adult learning is the emphasis on praxis - action and reflection upon the world in order to change it. This is a foundational construct of both democratic process and of transformational learning, which has process orientation at its roots. While transformation theory is closely linked with psychology and developmental theory, it has more recently been introduced as a theory of practice in adult education (Grabove, 1997). Mezirow's theory of transformative learning created a bridge for me to examine and facilitate transformation in the adult learning classroom.

Influenced by the writings of Paolo Freire, Third World emancipatory educator (Freire, 1970), and the phenomenon of consciousness-raising in the woman's movement during the 1970's, Mezirow evolved the theory of transformative learning as a process in changing perspectives and assumptions through reflective discourse (Mezirow, 2000). Transformative learning theory (Mezirow, 1978) emerged as a concept to describe how we revise meaning from our experiences through an encounter with difference that destabilizes our assumptions and our thinking, typically triggered by disorientation that occurs when an experience does not fit with our assumptions and expectations. Transformative learning is, at its core, an individual process involving shifting perspective and individual transformation (Mezirow, 1998).

According to Mezirow (1991) and transformative learning theory, the principal goal of adult education is reflective and transformational learning. He stresses the need to empower learners to think as autonomous agents in preparation for the twenty-first century, emphasizing that skills and knowledge have taken on new forms in an information age. Learners need to understand and manipulate information, not simply acquire it (Grabove, 1997, p.90). In this sense, Mezirow's theory is a continuation of emancipatory learning established by Freire (1970) in that he asserts education is not about escape from but rather about deeper immersion into the rough-and tumble-of human relationship (Mezirow, 2000).

Transformative learning theory (Mezirow, 2000) states that we, as learners, must journey away from certainty, away from familiar frames of reference to change meaning perspectives and to create shifts in understanding.

Transformative learning theory is built on the concept that there are necessary components to creating substantive change to our perspectives and frames of reference. These components involve a gamut of criteria including:

"disorienting dilemmas, self-examination of charged emotions, critical assessment of assumptions, exploration and planning, acquisition of knowledge and skills, provisional experimentation, and building competence and self-confidence, all of which contribute to reintegration dictated by one's new perspective" (Mezirow, 2000, p.22).

These are particular challenges and risks to the concept of transformational learning and to the transformative learning theory as it becomes increasingly inclusive. Mezirow (2000) asserts not all change is transformative and not all critical reflection leads to transformative learning. Transformation and transformative learning are concepts that are at risk for becoming generalized, popularly embraced, all-purpose words. When they become words with worn, sanded surfaces, and familiar, comfortable edges, they lose their potency and potential for stimulating awareness and consciousness. We need to be careful to

use them with cognitive and emotional discernment to maintain the clarity and nuances of their individual and collective meanings.

Disorienting Dilemma

Mezirow asserts that transformative learning begins with a disorienting dilemma, with some experience that problematizes current understandings and frames of reference and then functions as a stimulus and framework for perspective change and behavior change (Mezirow, 2000). Moving away from certainty takes us to what Jennifer Berger refers to as the growing edge, the threshold of our thinking and sense-making (Berger, 2004). Berger describes the liminal space of the edge of knowing as unfamiliar, potentially uncomfortable ground, making it “the most precarious and important transformative space” (ibid, 2004, p. 343).

Our lives are ripe with potential for disorienting dilemma in day-to-day minutiae to major life encounters. Our assumptions and ideas about the world get challenged in innumerable ways in the course of daily living such as when reading something new, or someone says something that exemplifies a totally different experience than we have had. In the larger spectrum of life, we may be involuntarily thrust into a new experience. We may also voluntarily undertake what Greene refers to as “a search to refuse the stasis and flatness of ordinary life” (Greene, 1988, p.123). As we know from the social sciences, lived experience in the classroom, and from our own personal lives, disorienting dilemmas and the edges of knowing have the potential to stimulate innovative action that we may not have previously considered. However, we also know that uncertainty can foster inertia, mis-direction, or even retraction of engagement.

As educators, we encounter learners' growing edges continuously. Education is optimal ground for challenge to assumptions and possible transformation of ideas and perspectives. The edges of knowing is where much of the action in the classroom occurs through cognitive stretch to ideas and thinking and through interpersonal and intrapersonal dynamics. If we teach for transformation, we encourage learners to embrace what they do not know.

There are many different experiences of the edge. Perry (in Berger, 2004) portrays that learners fear catastrophic disorganization, real or perceived, at the edges of their learning. Learners range from those who seek out, embrace the edge and enjoy transformation to those who anguish at the edges of their understanding or retreat from it back to some kind of certainty. A point of empathy with students may be to understand that transformational learning is not easy. While we, as transformational educators may be in a position to encourage, influence and facilitate transformation, Berger emphasizes that only the person on the edge can do that learning (Berger, 2004, p. 345). This is reminiscent again of what Rilke, the poet, reflected in his exhortation to the poet to draw up from inner resources and to "Go into yourself" (Rilke, 1934, p.18). Our challenge and responsibility as educators, supervisors and advisors in education, is to contain the learning process, to be "good company" at the edge (Berger 2004, p.347), and to hold our students' experiences while encouraging them to progress in means and methods that are appropriate to them.

The literature review reflects that personal familiarity with transformational education allows us to better facilitate and allow students to have their own personal encounters. Our central task as transformational educators is to present learners with diverse ways of thinking and acting. Our responsibility is to

go with their experiences, replete with potential complexity and messiness, but to not be a part of breaking the experience.

When teaching from heart, understanding the role of disorienting dilemma in transformational learning and changing meaning perspectives is a process, not an outcome (hooks, 1994). Canned, generic responses will not adequately attend to the complexities of adult learners' needs as they face the edges of their knowing. How, then, can we be better equipped to recognize, facilitate and manage learning at the edges of knowing in constructivist classrooms? How can we use our understanding to reshape our own assumptions about our practices? hooks challenges educators in both courage and skill when she asks "How far can we go in stretching peoples' experience without breaking the thread?" (hooks, 1994).

Transformational Learning

This literature review indicates that transformational learning benefits from systematic and self-critical inquiry. Transformative learning theory has been viewed primarily as a cognitive process that interdisciplinary contributors are increasingly challenging and developing to increase the validity of the theory across a wider range of contexts and audiences (Mezirow, 2000). The theory is criticized as too branded, rationally driven, and limited to consciously rational processes, and therefore limited to learners with cognitive, rational preferences for learning. The theory suggests that the meaning schemes we construct from our beliefs, attitudes, and emotional reactions are based upon experiences that can be deconstructed through critical reflection and acted upon in a rational way (Taylor, 1998). More recent researchers of the theory, such as Grabove (1976) and York and Kasl (2006), assert that transformative learners move in and out of the cognitive and the intuitive, of the rational and the imaginative, of the

subjective and the objective, of the personal and the social (p.89). This is the direction of critical inquiry that attracts my attention in transformational learning.

Why Bother with Transformational Learning?

There are many challenges associated with transformational learning. Mezirow asserts that the disorienting dilemma is not only a necessary component of transformative learning, it is also vital. Freire (1970) positioned disruption to assumptions as an essential factor in all human existence: “There is no creativity without ruptura, without a break from the old, without conflict in which you have to make a decision. I would say there is no human existence without ruptura” (p. 38).

Additionally, transformational education takes time, commitment and skill. Both educators and students experience cultural, societal and institutional delimitations in transformational learning. The fundamental principles of transformational learning involve values and processes that increasingly strain under contemporary economic and educational trends. With so much complexity and obvious challenge with transformational learning, why then would we even undertake such a proposition?

The value of art and creative processes to transformational learning lies in the many qualities inherent in art images and in the process of creating images. Art and creative processes reveal the complexities of transformational learning while also providing additional lenses through which to view possibilities and potential in disorienting dilemma. While the arts bring up nuances and subtleties that may be difficult to speak in words, shifting media also enables us to shake off the trappings of that which holds us down.

Through the charting of my own experience of disorienting dilemma and individuation, I am further convinced that transformational learning benefits from sustained and intensive experimentation with art images and ideas, from constructing and deconstructing them, putting together and taking them apart. Charting the path of transformation will facilitate educators to be more thoughtful and intentional guides. My doctoral exploration is, then, to expand transformational theory through focus on consciously non-rational processes related to art, methods of creative processes, and to extra-rational sources such as symbols, images and archetypes to increase its applicability to a more diverse group of learners.

Chapter Three

Visual Autoethnography: An Artful Encounter with Eros

As a path for mid-life individuation, I chose a logos journey to engage in graduate education as a means to develop my intellect through deep study, critical thinking, and objective understanding of my passion for the concept of transformation, all while developing my artistic self. I wanted to simultaneously claim my space as a visual artist and artist/scholar/educator. This was a difficult feat that required constant attunement to issues of balance and paradox. Sometimes, I felt at risk for becoming too academic in this pursuit. I feared losing my creativity. I feared I would lose the elixir I experience through my more easily experienced feeling function (Jung, 1969). How can artists be both intellectually and academically facile?

"It was as if it had been so important that to think about it, to know just what one was trying to do with one's paints, had been to risk losing something; it seemed at first glance as if an experience so intimate and vital must be kept remote and safe from the cold white light of consciousness which might destroy its glories."

Marion Milner in Barron, Montuori, & Barron, 1997 (p. 113)

Unquestionably I needed a new and different experience of Eros in my life; one authenticated through my own authentic, bodily-felt experience to counterbalance my developing intellect. In this chapter I describe my journey of discovery as I explored various ways to understand my own becoming. The autoethnographic exploration of my own transformation through studio engagements with collage and assemblage served as a guide to the design for this current project.

Arousal of desire and longing bring important messages of what is needed in one's life. During my studies, a tourist visit to the outdoor museum, The Gustav

Vigeland Sculpture Park in Oslo, Norway ¹ provided me with that kind of experience. Through that museum visit, I experienced an arousal of desire and longing that brought important messages of what I needed in my life.



Photos 2 Vigeland Sculpture Park

The statuary have a characteristic of human beings caught in a ‘freeze-frame’, or an act or moment that is archetypal and larger than the actual moment. They have a quality of truth - of “that’s how things are” - if we were to authentically and honestly portray internal or external realities of human experiences.



Photos 2 Vigeland Sculpture Park

The archetypal, dream-like quality of Vigeland’s statuary gave me just enough distance from reality to allow me to gaze at the most mundane, intimate or brutish exchanges without feeling intrusive, voyeuristic or naked myself, and to then contemplate its impact on me. I was stunned. I felt awe. I was overtaken by emotion. I became gripped with inarticulate longing, and tears began to stream down my face. I felt I had entered a dream. The moment was larger than

¹ The Gustav Vigeland Sculpture Park in Oslo, Norway is an open-air museum on 80 acres of grass and public gardens. The park contains 192 bronze and stone sculptures with more than 600 human figures.

life and numinous. Yet, it was all so familiar. Everywhere I saw the human condition and I felt I knew these figures and dynamics. I knew them in my senses, in my emotions, my relationships. I had met them in my own life, in the lives of my family, students, clients, colleagues, and friends, in the movies, in museums, on the streets. They are we. The archetypes that power our lives were enlarged and lined along the corridors, over the bridge, around the fountain, through the gardens, up the monolith.

The statutes are unblinking, truthful, straightforward, and honest. Some of the statues were hard to look at, not because of nudity but because of their truthfulness of the facts of humanity. The nakedness is not in the bodies. The nakedness is in the truthfulness. Some are exquisitely tender, full of beauty. Some portray mundane life. Some portray brute force. Some are brutally honest. I felt in some strange way that I had arrived upon truth that I already knew but had been secreted down deep in my bones. I longed to be able to be that truthful in my art, in my life.

The fact of nudity did not shock me. I was stunned, however, that a Norwegian had sculpted such unclothed physicality. I am a Norwegian American. What had I missed? Entwistle (2000) describes conventions of dress as the means by which bodies are made appropriate and acceptable within specific contexts. Dress is fundamental to micro-social order, and the exposure of naked flesh is, potentially at least, disruptive of that order. Here were acres of nude statues. Nowhere did that kind of physical forthrightness or cultural openness fit into the heritage of my earthy but socially and religiously conservative immigrant Norwegian mid-west culture.



Photo 3 Paternal Family Homestead in Norway. Late 1890's. Family archive.

My family (and droves of Scandinavians) left Norway while Vigeland was emerging as a renowned sculptor. I knew about their poverty, hardship, the beauty of the land, their religious struggles, but not about this art. Despite my contemporary and educated adult life, I felt like I had missed something important in my upbringing, in my education. Something of life, or of my culture, had eluded me or been kept from me. I felt like I had picked up an important piece of a puzzle. I was convinced it was a critical piece that would bring some larger picture into focus, but I did not know what that picture might even look like. What I knew, through my tears, was that I was in the throes of desire, of an energy force field that I had longed for, needed, and had striven to acquire throughout my life. I found it but what was it? And what was I now to do with it?

A Disorienting Dilemma

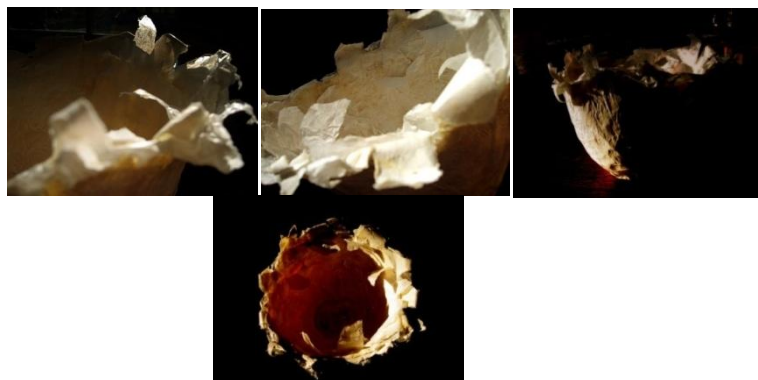
In that one touristy day I stumbled into a disorienting dilemma, which, in transformative learning theory, Mezirow (2000) describes as a situation of disorientation when an experience does not fit with our assumptions and expectations and becomes a catalyst for exploration. Despite my well-developed relational qualities and artistic proclivities, the sculpture park deeply challenged the precepts and assumptions of my Norwegian and mid-western agrarian, cultural grounding and perspectives while simultaneously rocketing me to a new plane of passion and artistic possibility. It all felt deeply connected to my body. My physical and emotional senses became quickened. My inarticulate longings felt like ache. I felt fiery burning deep inside. I wept. I wept with sorrow. I wept

with longing. I wept with recognition but I did not know of what. I felt like I was at the threshold of something, that, if I could just experience it, I would have “it”, whatever “it” was. From the perspective of depth psychology, Jung (1969) describes this as being gripped by an archetype – a psychic energy source that broke through into my conscious life.

Over time, I began to recognize that passionate, blissful, excruciating force and longing as Eros, the archetype of passionate desire and a creative, poetic force in life. I had an encounter with one of the most important driving forces in human life – passion, love, and desire. But this time it was not attached to another human being (man or woman) through love, friendship, collegiality, or sexualization. There was no projection. This was all within me.

The Inner Fire

This experience is reminiscent of the alchemical process in individuation that requires prima materia be submitted to a series of processes in order to be transformed into ‘The Elixir of Life’, or the ‘universal medicine’ (Edinger, 1994). I felt as if my prima materia was aglow with an inner fire. The inner fire is represented in the vessel photography series created from a papier mache vessel, the first of many vessel images - “places to hold my passion”.



Images 5 Papier Mache Vessel: "The Inner Fire." Actual size 10"x 10".

Here, through natural lighting and photography, a simple, white papier mache vessel (which might be as the blank white page for a writer, a blank white canvas for a painter, a chunk of clay for a sculpture) became emblematic of my transforming process in education. While I created a metaphoric vessel for my alchemical process of change and growth, I also began to extricate elements of transformation through recognition of the chaotic “edges” of learning (Berger, 2004), and I began to formulate an aesthetic for expressing the inexplicable, and mostly invisible process of transformation.

Dewey (1934) recognized the impact of desire and passion in the learning experience:

“When excitement about subject matter goes deep, it stirs up a store of attitudes and meanings derived from prior experience. As they are aroused into activity they become conscious thoughts and emotions, emotionalized images. To be set on fire by a thought or scene is to be inspired. What is kindled must either burn itself out, turning to ashes, or must press itself out in material that changes the latter from crude metal into a refined product.”(p.65)

Dewey’s imagery of transformation through internal fiery arousal is analogous of fiery imagery in alchemical symbolism in Carl Jung’s process of individuation in depth psychology. Here, too, transformation emerges from the prima material that must be submitted to a series of chemical procedures in order to be transformed into universal medicine (Jung in Edinger, 1994).

The shared imagery of ferment and fire suggest processes that constitute deep engagement and change. Not every learner elects to engage in such learning, but disorienting dilemmas may have the capacity to induce such powerful engagement. If we encounter or stimulate learners who become so engaged, Greene (1988), with Rilke (1934) encourages that we, along with our students,

learn to love the questions, as we live with their complexity and their potential to provide paths towards transformation, both the learners and our own.

I longed to increase my ability to integrate my passion values as embodied knowledge into my classrooms. How else might I experience the archetype of Eros? I needed to increase my understanding of my own passion values through an engagement of aesthetics. I explored passion and aesthetics as valuable aspects within the transformational nature of art. I also wondered how I can turn that which I truly love into a source of usable knowledge and practical wisdom in the art of teaching?

Eros, as Symbol and Metaphor

To Guggenbuhl-Craig (1980), a Jungian scholar, love is understood to include the entire spectrum of emotional attachment. Eros is the god of love, and yes, he is at work in the love men and women feel for each other, in all their expressions. But as the god of love, he is also at work wherever passion and desire are experienced, which includes love for anything and everything.

In ancient times, Eros' quality of love was thought to be spiritual as well as physical. Teachers, lawyers, politicians, healers, artists, mathematicians, plumbers, poets, engineers – all who love their professions – have experienced the pierce of Eros's arrow. Eros was generally believed to be the deity who caused the love of beauty, healing, freedom, and many other good things as well as the love between people. In fact, it is Eros who makes the gods (the archetypes) loving, creative and involved. Otherwise, the gods (the archetypes)

are neutral, cold, inhuman, and distant. Eros brings vitality and heat to any experience.²

The Eros and Psyche myth teaches me that a daily, passionate, informed, and reciprocal relationship with Eros is not to be attained without going through the paces and demands of learning how to be reflective, discerning and disciplined in attaining wisdom from within. The dark features of beauty, of the feminine (Aphrodite) make sure of that, an irony that is hard to contemplate unless we continue to remind ourselves that opposites exist even in archetypal realms (Jung in Edinger, 1994; Myss, 2006).

This knowledge (intuitive or acquired) may be an inducement for me to sometimes stay in the dark, uninformed and powered only by the capricious, immature, feel-good aspect of the young Eros archetype. Or, as Psyche exemplifies as she progresses through her journey, I may become weary, discouraged or overwhelmed by the throes of impediments to my passion. I may feel the eloquence of ineffability, but lack the ability to find words or action to respond to my passion. I need to learn how to press on for love, or in more pragmatic terms, to find a means by which to grow consciously.

Garrison (1997) declares that ignoring the role of eros in education is the most serious gap in contemporary education.

“The ancient Greeks made the education of eros, or passionate desire, the supreme aim of education. They thought it necessary to educate eros to desire the good. The result of such an education is practical wisdom, the

² In Roman mythology, Eros was known as Cupid and his mother was Venus. According to the Greek poet Hesiod, Eros was one of the first deities born into the world. He emerged from Chaos, and was the cause of the birth of the race of immortal gods and goddesses. In other tales, he is the son of Aphrodite, the Goddess of Love and Ares, the God of War. He is variously depicted as a beautiful winged boy or young man usually with a quiver of arrows or a torch of flame. He is a representation of one of the primeval forces of nature and the embodiment of the harmony and creative power in the universe. His representation in mythology and art has changed with the mores and expressions of the time. But always, Eros is known as the god of love, passion and desire.

ability to distinguish between what we immediately desire and what proves truly desirable after reflection.” (p.xiii)

While Garrison provides a more reasoned and intellectualizing means of recovering the original meaning of eros, the point is still the same. Eros is more than a feel-good archetype. Eros is a long neglected and misunderstood factor in how we make decisions, how we understand and organize ourselves, and how we determine what is important and good. Eros operates at full-tilt, and when we do not know how to manage his power, we get into trouble and sorrow.

Lessons Learned

One lesson in the story of Eros and Psyche is the value of organization in the midst of chaos and disorientation. Psyche learns this value through sorting and organizing, strategic planning, and ignoring distractions to her process. This, however, is where we, as educators, need to be discerning ourselves in response to students. Values of organization do not necessarily translate into traditional patterns and principles of organization in teaching. We need to take multiple factors into consideration, such as learning preferences (Gardner, 1983), the degree and type of disorientation and potential anxiety displayed by the student (Mezirow, 2002), developmental stages (Kohlberg, 1981), pedagogy (Hein, 1999; Diaz, 2004), and most importantly, the student’s interests (Dewey, 1994). In a constructivist learning experience, the educator is a tender to the learning process (Hein, 2002).

Does this mean a conscious relationship with Eros takes the fun and joy out of eros experiences? Perhaps, sometimes, it might feel like a hard day that does not end, but I think it is more generative to view it as growth and maturity. The Eros and Psyche story shows us that Eros (personally and culturally) is in need of some maturity. His task is to pierce hearts and to start heartfelt fires. His arrow can and does go anywhere and everywhere. He pierced my white papier mache

bowl with sunlight and set it ablaze, not only with beauty, but also with challenges and possibilities that needed to be explored. He is on task for Beauty's sake. It takes Eros time and experience, too, to 'grow up' and work hard on behalf of his own love interest. Eros is a rather capricious fellow until he himself falls in love and experiences desire and has to do hard things to bring his desire to fulfillment.

The prima materia, the primary material of our life, is perhaps the most potent stimulation in that it is generated from within (Jung, 1961). When I wept in the Vigeland Park and occasionally throughout my studies, it was for the recognition that not only has culture thwarted passion, I, too, thwart myself. It is even sadder when I do it knowingly, when I am not honest and brave enough to carry through with the difficult Psyche-tasks of reflection, discernment and discipline. This is where I am reminded of Henry Miller's searing statement about thwarted and slaughtered passion:

"Every day we slaughter our finest impulses. That is why we get a heartache when we read those lines written by the hand of a master and recognize them as our own, as the tender shoots which we stifled because we lacked the faith to believe in our own powers, our own criterion of truth and beauty. Every man, when he gets quiet, when he becomes desperately honest with himself, is capable of uttering profound truths."
(In Creators on Creating, 1997, p. 30)

Love's losses frequently hurt deeply, however they occur. They are like a living death, but if we can transcend egotism, we may catch a glimpse of the underlying rhythm of life, of the Matisse dance in each of us. We may recognize that a deeper sense of love lies in expansive growth through commitment to life and especially through relationships with others, as I experienced in the sculpture park.

A Growing Sense of Aesthetics: Ruins

Throughout my studies I collected ruins. Modern ruins. My favorite material was rusty, metallic, and wooden ephemera collected from roadways and sidewalks – washers, nuts, bolts, slivers and slabs of rusty iron, aluminum, wire, broken and worn glass. These images depict modern ephemera and fragments of ruins – all droppings and fragments of everyday life collected from streets in Massachusetts, New York City, Ground Zero, Minnesota and my family farm, Greece, Norway, and Italy. The majority, however, were collected from the streets between my graduate school and the college cafeteria. The shapes are separated, broken or worn from their origins and are functionally mysterious. I collected them prolifically, passionately. Johnson in Barron, Montuori, & Barron (1997) echo the artist/archeologist/anthropologist/researcher impulse:

"If the purpose is discovery, I need to let the experience direct me, one find leading to the next. Wandering gives me a new set of eyes – or removes adulthood's blinders from the ones I have. It is permission to see as well as to wander, to be an archaeologist of my own life." (p.60)



Images 6-a Modern ruins and ephemera. Actual size 1/4" to 1-1/2"

The ruins were beautiful to me. They looked like tiny pieces of modern sculpture. They excited my imagination with their mineral textures, the earthy, rusty, silver, coppery colors. I enjoyed them individually. I enjoyed arranging them, rearranging them. As I manipulated their abstract forms, my artwork grew increasingly abstract, universal and metaphysical, three dimensional, physical and kinesthetic. I reveled in affinity with Johnson (in Barron, Montuori, & Barron, 1997) when she states:

"I may not see the pattern if I look only at individual shards with their cryptic, broken meanings, turning them over in my mind, but from the perspective of time my wandering is intentional as the butterfly's and as necessary serendipity. Coming upon an unexpected good is a treat. If I give myself permission to wander, these small serendipities are as good as mine already" (p. 59).

The fragments turned me into a sort of philosopher. I wondered how the original source (car, building, truck, bicycle, modern accoutrement) can function without them. How long will it take until it no longer functions? If they are still functioning, how necessary was the fragment in the first place? What place do these fragments play in the total picture? I mused that decay and debris get dropped, extracted, sloughed, pitched all the time as we navigate our life. We shed modern ephemera like our bodies shed cells. We, like our vehicles, disassemble and deconstruct on rough roads or through poor care. The ruin ephemera are metaphors for life, for parts and pieces of our life. I saw natural art occurring in the form of ruins.

It might seem that in order to collect these modern ruins, I would have to always walk with my head down, as my colleagues liked to tease. How else would I be able to discern these objects among other street debris? I want to assure the reader that when one has a need and desire to find things, they are there, catching your eye as much as you are searching for them. I can spot a modern ruin from a distance.

"The faculty of creating is never given to us all by itself. It always goes hand in hand with the gift of observation. The true creator does not have to put forth in search of discoveries; they are always within his reach. He will have only to cast a glance about him. "

Igor Stravinsky in Barron, Montuori, & Barron, 1997 (p. 192)

But it is exquisitely as exciting to look down and see a ruin right before me, under my feet. Our streets are cluttered with ruins, some cities, states and countries more than others. Sullivan in Springgay (2008) reflects:

"There is something real about not knowing at the time why a decision was made, but having a felt need that an object or image may hold significance and

meaning that may be revealed later. When artistic practice is used within the context of inquiry, there is an investment in the potential that insight may emerge as a reflexive action sparked by a creative impulse that can help to see thing in a critically different way.” (p.242)

Many times, though, I felt awash in ‘data’ in my prolific use of ‘things and ephemera’ to contain, make meaning and explore my world. At times I doubted my ability to organize my distillation into valid, legitimate research. What was I doing? Is this research? Where was it leading? What meaning can possibly come from my eccentric, odd, but passionate practice?

Ruins became a core aesthetic of my research and narrative writing. I worked in ruins and fragments, raw edges, worn textures, layers, torn edges, showing things as they are, yet reassembling them to extract meaning, create new stances, find new perspectives. By definition, the ruin is more than a fragment:

“The ruin conjures up absence. And yet in the same breath one might say that the presence of a ruin creates a world with colors, atmosphere, and ghosts of its own, tearing itself off the past like a page ripped from a calendar. Hence the ruin is more than a fragment. By freeing it and endowing it with autonomy, writers and artists made it a genuine work of art; and by the time the ruin concept of the fragment arrived as a literary form, it was the ruin that served as its archetype.” (Makarius, 2004, p. 147)

But this is not just my truth. It is also a collective truth about the fact and consequences of devouring qualities – mine, yours, others, and even institutions. I do think that before we can speak to a truth, though, we need to face it first in ourselves.

Organization of Chaos

One day I lined up my ruin ephemera on a 12-foot sheet of white paper on my floor. The individual pieces of ruins instantly became a new art form. Then I had the desire to display them on a wall. I attached a thin gold wire to each one, constructing a tiny hanging loop at the end. I imagined a large white wall in a

gallery. But no such gallery existed, at least in the immediate future. I paced back and forth along this beautiful line of markings on the floor. I took pictures and reconstructed them in collages and in a journal. I wrote:



Image 6-b "Calligraphy". Ruins and ephemera. Actual size 5" x 12'

"The broken off, lost, discarded pieces are beautiful in their own right, but when sorted and organized, they became calligraphy that is uniquely my own. Thoughts and ideas emerge out of the strange but beautiful encryption."

I realized I could reorganize the ruins endlessly; so, too, my thoughts and ideas. Creativity comes from endless resources.

It was not practical to leave the fragments and ephemera on my floor. I looped them on a wire for storage and instantly experienced a cascade of neurological firing, cutaways, breakthroughs, and breakouts (Ratey, 2001). Art is also a neurological event. I wrote:

"I liken the wire loop to a large sweeping dragway and the neurological activity that navigated from my limbic system to my frontal cortex as a vehicle that ran over and flattened my blank-eyed, nail toothed inferiority complex while simultaneously scooping up and organizing all my jagged, unorganized, twisty, fragmented parts and pieces of emotions and experiences."



Image 6-c "The Necklace". Ruins and ephemera, complete. Actual size 5' x 7", 11 pounds.

OK, it was just a necklace. But I instantly knew it was more than a necklace and an object of adornment. New possibilities and ideas tumbled out before me. In my exhilaration and 'aha' moment, I knew I had made a giant leap of consciousness and aesthetic discernment. I still scramble to catch them as they roll out before me. Schick (in Le Van 2006) describes the role of necklaces in human history:

"Stringing objects on cords to hang around one's neck is common and comfortable enough that some of the oldest known necklaces are Neolithic, dating to around 15,000 B.C. and older. Reasons for making necklaces include demonstrations of power, love, status, religion, and wealth, to name a few." (p.7)

This necklace is not an object of adornment. It cannot be worn because it is very heavy. From another perspective, it is a manifestation of a dynamic process of discovery and embodiment. A viewer might make literal and symbolic interpretations, commenting on the weight and burden of so much modern ruin and ephemera. There is an element of truth in that perspective. I know what it feels like to be a modern woman wearing the burden of accumulated cultural, social and personal ruins. But I think that I successfully

created an art assemblage that transcends my personal experience. We all know what it is like to wear this piece, male and female. It is only our personal stories that are different.

A viewer might not take the personal route but see other implications on modern humanity. What is the impact of consumerism, fashion idealization, or ecological sloughing on our culture? What is the cost of our modernity? What is the cost of beauty? Is adornment essential or adjunctive? What does it mean to wear our ruins as adornment or identity? What kind of choices do we really have? The commentary and projections are as endless as the imagination of the viewers. That is the nature of art. That is also the sheer glee that I experience in the imaginative and cognitive realm of ideas.

The assemblage is an image of aesthetic appeal and curiosity. The viewer can take pleasure in aesthetic qualities— the textures, colors and material contrasts of metallica - rust, copper, iron, aluminum, silver, and wire and glass - against the silver minimalist modern female form (a vintage vestige of Macy's Department Store acquired at an antiques shop). The entire assemblage is minimalist, which serves to heighten its power to evoke a response.

Transformation is Becoming Visible

I distilled and felt my Self evolving, transforming slowly. I felt cognitively more organized. I felt affectively quieter. I felt my persona reconfiguring. I felt identified with the organized, compacted intensity of the assemblage. The range of perspectives that I wrestled with in previous artwork remained flexible and pliable. I felt, however, capable of seeing my Self, my challenging professional contexts in sympathetic and wiser terms without retreating, withdrawing or re-

burying my messiness. In my discovery and accomplishment of aesthetic minimalism, I also accomplished a transformation of stances and perspectives. In so doing, I became a more authentic person. I felt ever so much closer to my truth. I wrote:

“Authenticity is a requisite for being successful as a human being, whether as an administrator, a writer, a visual artist, or a researcher. I began this study feeling fragmented and broken off from my own authenticity and I am completing it closer to my own truth.”

Sometimes transformation can seem to be instantaneous but from my experience and initiatory study of brain neurology (Art and the Brain, 2006), one perspective must include the recognition of this as an organized, cascading neurological event that is influenced by years of experience and neurological patterning (Ratey, 2001; Levitan, 2006). It is closer to the joyful, relaxing, expanding experience of flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990) in which the brain unleashes a cascade of smoothly connected, unfolding neurological patterns (Ratey, 2001; Levitan, 2006).

I contrast this from the instantaneous neurological, retracting experience of flooding that we experience in trauma where neural pathways are scrambled and disorganized from too much firing in the ancient limbic system that is keyed for survival (Ratey, 2001). In trauma and anxiety, neural pathways are flooded with ancient survival approaches of “fight or flight”, ‘kill or be killed’ - responses that are not as globally functional in 2010 as it was for primordial humans. Excessive and un-integrated activity from the primordial limbic system inhibits organized executive functioning (such as attention, inhibition, planning, internal ordering, motor control, regulation of emotion and motivation) that emanates from the pre-frontal lobes of the frontal cortex.

Deconstruction of Boxes

While writing my qualifying papers I became inexorably drawn to boxes. Not intact boxes, but the torn, ripped edges and fragments that resulted from ripping boxes apart. I generated piles of fragments of all sizes – rolling, spiraling jags, chunks, fragments, parts, and pieces.

Each piece had its own beauty –abstract, simple and elemental - as did the rusty environmental ruins and ephemera. Again, I let my mind play with the forms. I reveled in the sheer beauty of the scrolling, rolling, unfurling, curling strips. I felt empathic to the hard, linear lines of other pieces.

While trying not to literalize the forms and the process into dichotomized logos and eros conceptualizations, I mixed and matched them to create new forms. I stacked shapes just to contemplate the abstract forms and sculpture of the interrelating ripped, torn, textured edges. I reveled in their beauty, each a paper ruin with textures, scrolls, and edges that quickened my senses with memory and possibility.

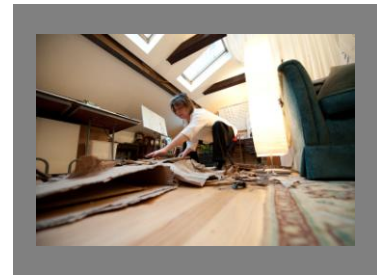
Photo 7-b



More surprising was the pleasure in ripping the boxes apart with both abandon and calculation. Sometimes it felt brutish. I had to leverage, cut, pull, and tear. Textures and lines were revealed or created.

Boxes are cultural workhorses for moving, storing and organizing the goods of our life, pragmatic vessels of everyday life. They are astoundingly strong with just three layers of warping and woofing fiberboard. What would we do without boxes? But the box has also become an iconic metaphor for all that is

Photo 7-a



tereotypical, safe, old, outworn, constrained and unimaginative in contemporary functioning, and stale in terms of creativity and productivity. I continuously ripped and rearranged them— all the while wryly noting that, after having created numerous vessels as a metaphorical process of holding my passion in the alchemical fire, at the closure of my coursework, I was now reveling in taking apart the quintessential vessel, the box.



Image 8 "Metamorphosis". Mixed media. Actual size 14" x 20".

Furthermore, after having previously manifested Eros in a glorious depiction of metamorphosis and integration through an orange, fiery butterfly, I was also depicting the internal, brutal, change-drama that goes on invisibly inside a chrysalis through collage and assemblage. It all seemed so dis-ordered and ironic. Decomposition and deconstruction. Coming apart, not together. More chaos, not less. Divergence, not emergence.

I got lost in the process. The chaos of the abstract configurations refused to come together in an aesthetic or meaningful assemblage. Once again, I welled with doubt and uncertainty about what I had undertaken. What have I been doing all these years? What value could this possibly have for academia? For the first time, I considered stopping, quitting the entire enterprise. While I knew there was value in the theme of taking apart boxes and putting them back together in a new way, I was experiencing how difficult is that enterprise. The Academy and all that implies, is, perhaps, one of the biggest boxes of all. I derived affinity and understanding from Makarius (2004):

"The task of the artist is to go back to the original chaos and gradually transform it, within the work of art, into conscious chaos, into organized confusion (p.149). "We need to understand the artist's relationship to chaos is in the context of a desire to synthesize contradictory forces and a conviction that truth itself is inevitably fragmentary" (p.148).



Image 9-a "Metamorphosis, continued". Mixed media assemblage. Actual size 3' x 5'.

I finally created a flag-like assemblage that was aesthetically beautiful to my eye. I closely attended to foundations of design to create an abstract wall sculpture intimating unrolling and unfolding narratives. The materials (paper and twigs) related to each other. Lines and structures intimated the logos and eros factors in the stories of our lives. I even included butterfly spots of eye-decoy as a nod towards self-empowerment and self-protection. But it was not until I rotated the entire assemblage forty-five degrees did meaning unfurl before me.



Images 9-b "Change of Perspective". Mixed media assemblage, continued, in rotation.

I saw yet another ruin – the capital portion of an iconic column (the top part), replete with crown molding of traditional architecture. I saw architectural ruins of Greece and the foundations of civilization and organized knowledge. I saw the Academy made visible through its numerous institutions, degree programs, research, publications, professors. (Once, I think I even saw Plato, Socrates, my doctoral committee - Gene Diaz, Bill Stokes and Sara Quay, sticking their heads out from behind the folds and rolls!). I saw the foundations upon which culture is constructed. I saw knowledge and life – simultaneously enduring, tentative,

and transitory. I also saw the narratives, my narratives, unfurling, unfolding, bridging down from the capital.



Image 9-c Mixed media assemblage, continued.



Images 9-d "Unfurling". Mixed media assemblage, continued.

I felt intrinsically a part of it all.



Assemblage 9-e "Iconic Ruin". Mixed media assemblage, complete.

To complete the assemblage, I built out the ruin into an actual twelve-foot assemblage of a column. The sheer size and heft of the assemblage emphasizes the scale and proportions of this exploration. But for the sake of time, I had to stop, collect my bearings, and articulate the process so far. This assemblage begs more development. There are surface areas perhaps, for script. Perhaps

collage representation of iconic figures or of my own processes. It, like me, is a work in process.

The Studio Experience

Self-study, in any form, can be powerful and potentially transformational. Auto-ethnography, as a research genre, evokes new questions about self and the subject, reminding us that our work is grounded, contextual and rhizomatic. Yet, how do we know what we know? What is the authority of that evidence?

In using an arts-based method to gather my self-study data, I extended the genre of autoethnography to include autoethnography through visual arts. What followed - living inquiry through visual arts-based autoethnography - became both the method and the meaning-making of my early doctoral studies. I experienced my journey of self-discovery through a framework of archetypal concepts while recognizing continuums of human experience that included cognitive, sensory, affective, spiritual, and relational ways of knowing - concepts and means that are not mutually exclusive, but rather overlapping and intersecting, much like assemblage and collage. Ways of knowing are frameworks upon which we construct everyday life - our conversations, arguments, affiliations, the decisions we make, how we work, play, think, even vote. The evidence of my self-study is comprised of art images constructed from modern ruins and ephemera, and is also found in the dynamic relationship between the images and the ways of knowing and how that dynamism contributed to changed cognitive awareness and expression of Self. Magritte, (1938) a herald of constructivism, said, "A painting does not express ideas but has the power to create them"(in Whitfield, 1992, p. 111). Deep learning in the studio provided new paradigms from which to deconstruct and reconstruct frames of references, adjust my emotions, and alter habits of mind and practice,

while deepening my understanding of the role and impact of arts in adult learning.

What became apparent to me in the process of the visual autoethnography is that my studio exploration was an exploration in epistemology - that of constructing and validating learning derived from collage and studio methods. Sullivan (2005) affirms that art is more than a personal rite of passage of personal discovery. The studio experience is a construction site of knowledge-making. But what artists do in the practice of creating artworks - the processes, products, proclivities, and contexts that support this activity – is not well studied from the perspective of the artist (Sullivan, p. 82).

Reclamation

Epistemology asks questions of what and how, and requires introspection to understand the strengths and weakness of what we think we know. True learning is integration of data and experience on both affective and cognitive levels (Eisner, 2002) a dynamic interaction and balance of logos and eros (Jung, 1969), but I realized I lacked sufficient recognition and articulation of what Eros, as a principle and archetype of passion, desire and love, could look like in my life and in the classroom. Despite my abiding commitment to transformation through art and creative processes in adult learning, along with the majority of western culture (Garrison, 1997), I am deeply impacted by the dominant post-modern, logos principle of logic and structure. Garrison (1997) declares that teachers intuitively understand that life-affirming passionate desire or eros lies in the middle of everyday practice, yet eros is missing from almost all theory and research on teaching (p.xix).

Paradoxically, I was self-conscious that my art appeared self-focused, self-indulgent. Self-indulgence, introspection and individualization are critiques to autoethnography. Yet when I started to share my work, I discovered that colleagues, artists, students, and friends resonated with the personal and archetypal themes. I began to understand that my study was not limited to artists or educators. It speaks to any aesthetically oriented individual who is aware of desire and who wishes to problematize and/or professionalize the experience of longing and integrate it to enlarge their teaching skills and meaning to life.

My experience in adult education is a common problem, one articulated in a long lineage of educators that include Dewey at the turn of the century. My exploration of artist-teacher research practice provided a means for me to explore passion - how we can we learn from that which we truly love; how we can turn that which we truly love into a source of usable knowledge and practical wisdom in the art of teaching; how we can better understand passion as part of our reasoning processes and use it as a tool for learning; how we can organize passion and aesthetics for knowledge and perspective change. Through this first phase of doctoral study, I recognized and claimed myself as a discipline bricoleur adept at performing diverse functions within the fields of psychology, art, organizational management, and higher education. The research method of visual autoethnography allowed me to find my voice, exercise my ideas, and validate myself as an educational researcher and as a visual artist.

And Then...

I dreamed:

I was inside my childhood playhouse. I wanted privacy so I went to lock the door, but first I looked back towards the farm. The woods were not as thick as they used to be. I saw my farm in a way that was not visible years ago. My playhouse was no longer

secluded and as isolated as it had been. It was still scruffy, but inside there were shelves covered with cloth curtains. I was curious what was behind them. I locked the door. I was surprised at the rusty, industrial style, size and scale of the lock. There were no glass or panes in the old windows, so in actuality, the playhouse was unsecured and totally accessible from the outside.

I woke up recognizing my childhood playhouse as a transformed ruin, in actuality, in my dream world, and in my imagination. Perhaps this is the circularity that T.S. Eliot writes about when he says: "We arrive where we started/And know the place for the first time" (1943).



Image 10

"Childhood Playhouse: A Transformed Ruin". Collage. Actual size 10" x12".

Chapter IV

Research Methods

Overview

Given the range of modalities, data production, and expression within arts-based research, there are many possibilities and strategies for merging research and art. This research was qualitative, art-based, artist-teacher research in a constructivist art studio/classroom for undergraduate adult learners with minimal to no formal art education or exposure. The course was designed to enable adult learning students to have an encounter with art that would include development of art skills within the medium of collage, to have an experience with art and aesthetics, and to facilitate recognition of art concepts that could apply to the whole of their lives (as a way of knowing). The research was also designed to explore the potential transformational and co-transformational potential of those components.

The Question

How can the use of collage, assemblage and mixed media be transformational and co-transformational in an undergraduate adult learning course on imagination and creativity?

Definition of Terms

As discussed in the literature review of arts-based research, there are increasingly numerous ways to speak of arts-based research paradigms and assumptions. For the purpose of clarity, the following definition of terms provide context and differentiation for the terms used within this research.

Art and Creative Art Processes: Art and creative art processes are experimental and responsive art engagement through which the representational form may embody elements of various art forms - poetry, fiction, drama, two-and three-dimensional visual art, including photography, film and video, dance, music and multimedia installation. In this research, creative process was expressed primarily through visual arts, with flexibility in the curriculum for a range of expression through other forms.

Collagist Methodology: To thoroughly, deeply explore the transformational potential of collage, a collagist methodology was utilized as the conceptual and artistic engine to frame, organize, and power the entire inquiry. Collage and assemblage is a contemporary fine arts practice with a postmodern epistemology based on the idea of spontaneously layering images and symbols through which perspectives, practices and traditions can be reinterpreted and connections can be forged between the seemingly random or disparate (MacIntyre Latta, 2001; Diaz, 2002; Vaughn, 2005). A collagist methodology entails lying down and removing layers, moving parts and pieces around, changing forms, and making connections. A collagist methodology brings things together while simultaneously recognizing the separateness of parts and pieces.

In this research, collage is driven by the response and interplay of student's individual and group engagement, and that of my artist-researcher's response and interplay with the students. While experimentation with various art materials familiarized the students with the potential of art tools to express one's self, collage was the primary method of drawing out student participation. My own art-making as artist-teacher researcher during the class revolved around collage and assemblage. Collage, accompanied by reflectivity, was the means of the student's and my knowledge- and meaning-making processes. Collage

provides endless forms of exploration, expression, analysis, and knowledge-building.

Constructed knowledge: The central premise of constructivism is that human beings construct knowledge and that human experience is the site upon which knowledge is constructed. The world of meaning is generated by us through personal and idiosyncratic contexts (Dewey, 1938).

Prima materia: The primary material of our life generated from within (Jung, 1969).

Rhizomatic: A concept used by arts-based researchers that privileges all entrances to their work to discover connections, new meanings, linkages between points, the map of the rhizome, and how the map may be modified by entrance from any particular point for the purpose of avoiding reductive analysis and opening up new ways of extracting intensities, tonalities and energy.

Self: Represents the totality of our being, the center of our psyche that carries our sense of meaning and purpose as we move towards experiencing its wholeness.

Transformational and co-transformational learning: Teaching and learning, between the learner and the educator, that is a continuous process of reconstruction of experience and education as change, growth or maturity occur in the learning process.

Research Design: Arts-Based, Artist-Teacher Research

The research design is arts-based, drawing on the genre of artist-teacher research. Arts-based research is a method of research in which art may function as methodological enhancement, an instrumental use of art, or where the research process itself is regarded as an art form. Artist-teacher research is an identity and form of research that integrates the multiplicity of perspectives of the artist as an educator and researcher, utilizing image as an integral component of the inquiry process. The use of one's own artistic practice is primary or complimentary to other forms of inquiry (Springgay, 2004; Irwin, 2008).

Artist-teacher research privileged me with multiple perspectives and angles of approach in the data collection and analysis, while utilizing image as an integral component of the inquiry process. In this research, art-making was the primary source of data gathering for both the students and me, as the artist-teacher researcher. An emergent approach allowed for guiding questions and prompts that initiated exploration and analysis while simultaneously allowing questions to evolve through continued engagement, during and following the course time-frame.

The Context

The research was conducted in a non-traditional, accelerated model of programming for undergraduate adult learners in which courses are divided equally between direct contact and independent/collaborative work over a time period of 5 weeks versus traditional 14 week semesters (in this case, four consecutive classes, and then a final fifth class). Within an intensive format, students are required to participate in twenty contact hours combined with

twenty hours of independent and/or collaborative work. Each of the classes was four hours in length, scheduled mid-week, from 6-10 PM.

The research setting was a 400-level art course at a small liberal arts college on the east coast of the United States in the Graduate and Professional Studies Division. The adult learner Bachelor of Science curriculum includes a Core Curriculum for students in their designated disciplines with course selections from the divisions of Arts and Humanities, Science and Mathematics, and Social Sciences. Students enrich their programs of study by choosing electives from a distribution of courses outside their major designations (College Handbook, 2009-2010). Depending into which program of study an adult learning student is matriculated, this course, *Art, Collage and Imagination* serves as a requirement in the Liberal studies and Psychology programs, and as a general elective in the Business program of study.

A studio is typically understood as a classroom which is set up to provide space for learners to engage in artistic, discursive and dialogic exploration of art products and art processes. The studio space in this research was a flexible-design, non-traditional classroom that allowed for an art studio set-up for each class. Large round tables were configured into a large circular pattern for group discussion. As needed, the room was re-organized for work space by spreading the tables out for privacy and flow of movement, or consolidated to make room for floor work. Walls, easels and white boards were utilized for horizontal display space and content communication. An adjacent work room with a sink and cleaning supplies facilitated ease in the maintenance of the studio environment. Mediated technology allowed for internet access and digital display of artwork or support materials. Space was available for students to store art work, and studio space was made available to students between class meetings. The

flexibility of the classroom greatly eased facilitation of the intensive, quick-change nature of intensive course delivery and the research process.

Syllabus

The syllabus was a textual collage - constructed as a collaged, curricular road map, of sorts, that was subject to change based on the needs of the class. While creating a curricular framework that met requirements of the academic program and the official course objectives was important and necessary, delivery of the course was simultaneously interactive and constructivist. A constructivist syllabus must necessarily be flexible, fluid, and interactive – capable of addition, subtraction and adjustment of course elements. (See Appendix for full document.)

Through an exploration of imagination and creativity, the curriculum was designed to guide students in an arts-based exploration of living inquiry and rendering of Self while simultaneously exploring the potential of collage as a way of being in contemporary life.

Data Collection Methods

The syllabus was designed to facilitate data gathering. Drawing from the activities of the class, the data gathered included the following: Weekly art assignments that coincided with weekly topical readings; a student-driven final art project; student reflections in the form of free-writes; weekly response papers; a final reflection paper; class critiques and discussion of student art-work and presentations. Faculty observation included the following sequential assignments:

Ethnographic Artifacts

The students were given a pre-assignment to bring a meaningful object to the first class to introduce themselves. An objective of the first assignment was to induct the students into the concept of world-making and symbolism by bridging their everyday world of meaning-making to the classroom site of artful construction.

The leveraging of precious objects as ethnographic artifacts (Diaz, 2002), full of memory, passion, and meaning-making, draws from a borderland epistemology that reminds us borders are always with us and within us. Ethnographic and autobiographic accounts show how we mark and cross those lines, carrying back artifacts and stories to collect ourselves as we work to understand the dialectics of self and culture (Behar, 1996, Diaz, 2002). Behar (1996) describes those stories and artifacts as an effort “to map an intermediate space we cannot yet quite define, a borderland between passion and intellect, analysis and subjectivity, ethnography and autobiography, art and life” (p.174). It was my hope that such sharing of precious objects would readily introduce the students to each other through sharing an object of utmost meaning- a literal place on their personal maps.

Group Mural

Mural-making is an art experience that can bring individuals together for a common purpose. There are many ways to organize and arrange this activity to suit any particular objective. The purpose of this ritual/exercise was to continue building group trust and cohesion through non-threatening play. Paradoxically, the mural was a way to reduce resistance and disorientation through the shock of revisiting a familiar, child-like activity. Finally, I also hoped to initiate

expressiveness and imagistic creativity on a level playing field. Of play, Booth (1999) states:

"Play combined with creative art process is a potent and fertile combination. It taps directly into what you know, bypassing interpretation and explanation. It bears no responsibility beyond the moment, it is not self-conscious, it distorts the sense of time, it seeks control within different kinds of order, and it tells the truth. What you know meets with what you do not know"(p.125).

Assemblage: Vessel

The students were assigned to create an object, which we referred to as a vessel, from any materials which engaged them. The students were encouraged to conceptualize a vessel in the broadest definition of the word while constructing it as an art piece that would imagistically and metaphorically contain and hold their artistic passions as they engaged in the study. There was only one requirement - it must literally have some form of a holding/containing space to help engage and concretize the idea and concept of vessel. The students were given questions/prompts to consider:

What does this vessel mean to you?
How does/can this vessel contain you and/or your passions?
How is the selection of materials important to you?
How is this vessel a metaphor for you?

Collage Construction

The purpose of the collage activities was to explore foundations and elements of design related to collage and to experience the approachability and potential of collage as a creative art form. The collage activities were also constructed to identify personal blocks and impedances to creativity and to understand the role and value of chaos in creativity. The collage activity was divided into two projects - Collage #1 and Collage #2.

Collage #1

The purpose of Collage #1 was to express personal impediment to creativity. It was variously referred to it as the "Impediment/Inner Critic," the "internal running commentary" that criticizes or impedes their approach to art, the "artist block," or "anything" that impedes their creative process.

Several assumptions undergirded the Collage #1 assignment. A primary assumption was that resistance, reluctance, disorientation, fear, and creative impediments dwell in the world of *prima materia* - the under-valued, under-developed, misunderstood, hidden, shadowed realms of human experience. A curricular and research method in this artist-teacher research was to address objections and impediments to creativity and learning up front - to invite resistance, and give it creative expression and value. An assumption in this research is that if we do not acknowledge the presence of impediments to the creative process, in addition to their potential value, they will make their presence known anyway, typically in disagreeable, distracting or impeding ways. The method hopefully brings learning impediments to as much consciousness and focused awareness as possible so they do not unknowingly undermine the student's learning process. However, development of self-awareness and consciousness is recognized as a process in multiple areas of human experience. Process infers a gamut of factors that may include time, personal history, and creative agency.

Another assumption in this assignment was that we have to first recognize that impediments are present before we can develop an individual response to them. However, to minimize dwelling on negative influences, Collage #1 was limited to 15 minutes because, as I had learned from my own living inquiry, this is potentially a very powerful, emotionally stimulating and activating assignment. I

did not want the students to begin intellectualizing or changing their images to make them more acceptable. An assumption was that 15 minutes would provide the students with just enough time to acknowledge their impedance without additional time to edit it, cover it up, or develop shame or anger with it. My intention was also to operationalize the working, dynamic group trust that would hopefully be created through the initial vessel work to manage this potentially difficult (self-incriminating) *prima materia* in the service of creative process.

Collage #2

Immediately following Collage #1 and group discussion, the students were invited to create a second collage, Collage #2. The purpose of Collage #2 was to freely explore the art materials, experiment with collage and express whatever they were drawn to, and to fully explore the experience of collage for the remainder of the evening.

In recognition that this may be a first encounter with collage (or perhaps any) art form for the majority of the students, I recognized that too many choices may be overwhelming. But I also did not want to facilitate cookie-cutter production of collages. I strove to find a balance between managed access and freedom to imagine.

The collage technique and process was straightforward and basic. In keeping with my research exploration of the color white as a metaphor of possibility and potential, the students each received firm, white, 14" x 18" boards as foundation for their collages, but they were not limited to white or to that board. There were numerous other papers, colors and textures from which they could choose as a foundation for their collages.

In keeping with my own collagist methodology of hunting, digging, and searching for imagistic ephemera, the students were invited to pilfer through a large stock of magazines for images that appealed to them for any reason. They were encouraged not to ask “why” they liked an image or word or graphic. They could later hone their search, selecting images with the most appeal. They were also informed of the option of working solely or in combination of textures and colors, drawing from a large selection of paper, fabrics and embellishments that were also available. Demonstration of various forms of attachment, glazing, and embellishment were included as the project commenced and throughout the activity.

Final Project - Free Expression

In preparation for the final project of free expression, the students were presented with yet another model for artistic work. Together we watched the artist documentary *Rivers and Tides: Working with Time* depicting installation artist, Andy Goldsworthy (2004). The documentary is a rare, in-depth portrayal of what happens inside one artist's studio and inside his creative process. The purpose of showing the documentary was to hopefully provide tangible, visible authentication to the student's own creative processes and fledging impulses. It was also my attempt to provide didactic information beyond traditional text to support and accelerate the intuitive nature and idea-formation within the student's art-making.

The students were provided wide latitude for the creation of their final project. They were invited to artistically portray something that was new, stretching, integrative, and meaningful to them and which communicates a theme that stood out for them in the class; and/or portray a new perspective they discovered that created changes in their thinking; and/or creatively portray

something they are passionate about. They were prompted to consider creating discrete art objects, installations, or perhaps an artful group experience they wished to facilitate. The final presentations were invited to be a time of manifesting each student's creative process, and hopefully, as is a component of the arts, a time of celebration of creative process.

Accompanying Data Gathering

Accompanying each art project, students wrote reflections in the form of free-writes, weekly response papers and a final 5-7 page reflection/integrative paper about their art project and their experience in the class. They were encouraged to express themselves freely, incorporating as many concepts from the course as possible.

In keeping with the tradition of art class critiques, class discussion of student artwork and presentations occurred following each project, during which time I also participated with faculty observation.

As a component of the artist-teacher research experience, my simultaneous artistic and process experiences included the research tools of field/process notes and art-making before and during the course delivery. I continued to make my own art following the class as an emergent analysis. (While the course required a syllabus and letter grading -see Appendix, student grading was not factored into the research design, methodology or analysis of the research.)

Participants

While neither the course nor the research was gender limited, gender representation in the research was homogenous. The class roster and resulting research participants included ten female adult learners, Diane, Leah, Emily,

Amber, Anita, Carol, Doris, Donna, Rachel, and Caroline (the names are pseudonyms to protect the student's privacy). The ten students represent a broad age spectrum of female adult learners – young adult, mid-life and older adult. The youngest woman was 23 years of age and the oldest woman was 72 years of age. The remaining women ranged in age from 30 to 51, with an average age of 40 years. The social relationships of the women were diverse. The research represented single women and wives, single and married mothers, widow, grandmother, divorcees. One woman was undergoing an imminent divorce during the course delivery.

Within this class, eight women were matriculated into the undergraduate Business program of study, one woman was matriculated into the Liberal Arts program of study, and one was an audit-participant. Eight women were employed in various full-time business settings, including marketing for a pharmaceutical company, a business/account manager in a retirement home, a children's dental hygienist, an active United States Military Reservist with combat experience, a corporate events manager, a medical patient research assistant, and a business systems analyst. One woman was a stay-at-home parent, and one woman, a retired, yet practicing fiber and textile artist.

For nine of the students, completion of their degree was strategy for long-term financial and professional security, professional growth and development, in addition to personal growth and independence. The sustained world-wide economic crises had displaced several women from jobs they loved and they were now unhappily, but gratefully, working in what they called "temporary survival" jobs. One student contemplated degree completion to fulfill an education dream, but faced with both possibility and reality, the 'road-not-taken' began to look too long and arduous, and her health was too unstable. A

life-time dream and attitude shifted before the class even started. She then participated to fulfill her need for artistic, creative stimulation and collegiality.

Course and research participation was available to adult learners with any amount of exposure to the arts (including none). Two students had engaged in private art classes years earlier, and a third student had an early foray into formal art education. The students variously viewed the class as a respite from the arduous monotony of business courses, as an opportunity to work with this instructor/researcher, and to experience something "fun and different" in education through an elective offering.

Method of Analysis: Process

An arts-based analysis in this research assumed the students' work as the starting point for analysis. Process was an interpretive, analytic tool. Student output and input occurred on multiple levels, continuously, at each and every class. Initial analysis by both students' and me, the artist-teacher researcher, occurred through interpretive discussion and analyses of art production and art images, student reflections and critiques, spontaneous and formal writings, and formal presentations.

During the course delivery, the students made meaningful connection of their art work to their lives and meaningful connections between each other's art work. Throughout the research, I sought to discern where and how the students were experiencing transformation through their art engagement. I reflected and mirrored their impressions and interpretations back to them, leveraging each art product for the learning process and for amplifying and exemplifying concepts and themes that were beginning to emerge with each student and within the class at large.

In class, through my field notes and back in my private studio, I created my own art as part of the analytical process, paying particular attention to places of my discomfort, to areas where I felt tweaked or drawn, for the purpose of deconstructing my own assumptions, as I had in the visual autoethnography collaging, writing, and creating assemblages. I continued with more advanced analysis following the course delivery through continued objective review of the research data and through analysis of my own collage and art-making in response to the students work. The interplay of images and narrative created the ethnographic field for both the students and me to portray the analysis of our work.

Multiple Perspectives: Metaphor and Method

Multiple perspectives were obtained from the art products (ethnographic object, group mural, vessel, collages, and a final art project), the students' written responses (free-writes, response papers and a final paper), class discussion, and my participation as artist-researcher. I engaged the metaphor and method of crystallization to conceptualize and analyze both the students and my processes of learning and knowledge-making. The metaphor and method of crystallization contributes to the consideration of multiplicity and complexity of the research experience. Crystallization, a means of qualitative research analysis, acknowledges multiple perspectives and assumptions (Richardson, 2000). In the image of crystallization, there are more than three sides from which to see the world. The crystals "infinite variety of shapes, substances, transmutations, multi-dimensionality, and angles of approach" (Richardson, 2000, p.934) reminds us that what we see depends upon our angle of view and the premises of our assumptions. Crystallization, as a multi-dimensional concept, aligns well

with the multi-dimensional methodology of collage and assemblage. It also provided a means to extend beyond traditional qualitative triangulation (three discreet points of validation of data) to bring forward the meaning- and knowledge-making process in the research.

Interconnectedness versus Classification

Artist-teacher researchers seek alternative means to conventional classification of phenomena, which uses empirically-based conceptual frameworks to categorize things (Paley, 1995). A common thread in the literature review of artist-teacher researchers is the imperative to maintain nonobjective artistic practices. Drawing upon the analogous, connecting function of collage, arts-based researchers envision interconnectedness where criteria are used to identify relationships between and among entities of interest.

Bricolage and the rhizomatic are conceptualizations with no orienting centers, serving as strategic, non-compartmentalized, un-centered, methodological approaches to recode both literary and visual experience in arts-based research (Paley, 1995; Irwin et al., 2004; Springgay et al., 2008). These methods of analysis account for the students and the artist/teacher researcher in a progressive process of analysis and leaves open the possibility for both artistic and textual methods of analysis. These approaches are affirmed by Maxine Greene (1988) who encourages the development of awareness and cognition through both reflective and logical thinking while asserting that “the point of cognitive development is to interpret from as many vantage points as possible lived experience, the ways there are of being in the world” (p.120).

Trustworthiness

Maintaining openness to an indeterminate experience of art without categorizing, classifying, and creating hierarchies is contrary to disciplines of analytic practice. As hooks (1996) reminds us, in refusing the center, one chooses “the margin as a site of radical openness” (p.48).

Full contextual detail enables both trustworthiness and limitations of assessing the art and textual materials. This indicates a need to seek understanding of both internal and external art-contexts. In this research, such contexts were multi-faceted, reflecting, but not limited to: the academic discipline of the students; the research paradigm and theoretical frame – (that of artist-teacher research as living inquiry concerned with self-and human study); my contribution as the researcher; the extent of disparity between the students and me, as artist/teacher researcher’s, ethnicity, religion, gender, class, and values; the art objects; and interactions with the art objects and art products.

Emergent Process and Reflexivity

Barrett and Bolt et al. (2009) advance compelling explanations of emergent process and reflexivity as both aspects and strengths of the subject dimension in studio-based research. They assert studio-based enquiry as a method that unfolds through practice, and that practice, itself, produces knowledge and engenders further practice.

The problematic nature of how the artist-teacher researcher knowingly or unknowingly interprets images in the construction of meaning, however, is an issue of ongoing debate (Sullivan, 2005). Reflexivity was a construct initially identified in feminist discourse, linked to the notion that positions are

discursively and interactively constituted and are open to shifts and changes as the discourse shifts or as one's positioning within or in relation to that discourse shifts (Sullivan, 2005). In other words, one's stance can change based upon experience (MacIntyre Latta, 2001; Diaz, 2002). Sarah Pink (in Sullivan, 2005) argues that reflexivity can be a conceptual asset in revealing information, but also an operational liability that can raise concerns about issues such as ethics.

A challenge of reflexivity lies in mastering the art of self-reflection. In this research, I examined and looked for connections and themes in my students artwork through introspection of my artwork and my writing. The multiple sources of arts-based, oral and written data by both students and me, the facilitator, together with repeated contact during the course delivery, provided face-to-face opportunities to check and confirm my observations and provide checks and balances for my assumptions, biases, and interpretations.

Limitations

This research study was comprised of all female adult learners, thereby limiting extrapolation of analysis and meaning-making to that singular population despite recognition that male adult learners may be similarly interested and impacted through such an encounter with art. This limitation of the study is simultaneously strengthened in that the female voices were then privileged to openly explore the world of female adult learners without gender inhibitions and tensions, thereby opening the world of female adult learning experience to a wider audience.

The accelerated format of the course delivery provided numerous on-going challenges, delimitations and opportunities within the research process. Time

was a precious commodity, and therefore required close management in the course delivery. Time is also necessary to distillation of meaning in making art. During the course delivery and following, throughout the analysis, the factor of time sometimes functioned as a stimulant for creative thought and intuition, and other times, as a deterrent to reflectivity.

In the following chapter, Chapter Five, I discuss five themes through which the analysis was conducted. The thematic analysis included ways of knowing on continuums of human experience, including, cognitive, affective, sensory, spiritual, and relational ways of knowing (ways of knowing that emerged through my visual autoethnography as indicated in Chapter III).

Chapter Five

Thematic Analysis

(themes on continuums of human experience)

The Students: Ten Women

Ten women: mostly strangers to each other, spanning young adulthood to elder age. Single women with no children; single and married mothers; wives; a widow; a grandmother; a divorcee, an imminent divorcee; daughters; sisters; aunts; friends.

Ten women: sharing fond and joyful memories, stories of longing and lost loves, hurt, pain and struggles; moving in with a new love and his children. Stories of chaos, life messiness, recovery from heroin addiction, war and soldiering, family dysfunction, family values, economic squeeze, time squeeze, unfulfilling jobs; lives in transition; life boredom.

Ten women: engaging in spirited, spiritual, emotional, thoughtful, sometimes irreverent discussions. Beautiful women - women with tattoos, women horrified at tattoos.

Ten women: worrying about the future of children, all children.

Ten women: divulging details of their personal lives, telling little narratives within big narratives.

Ten women: whose lives intersected for five weeks in an art class in an adult learning classroom.

This classroom was the site of my dissertation research, driven by the question:

How can the use of collage, assemblage and mixed media be transformational and co-transformational in an undergraduate adult learning course on imagination and creativity?

Thematic Analysis: Themes on continuums of human experience

(All names have been changed to protect the anonymity of the students)

"Thinking in any of its manifestations, is a cognitive event." Eisner (2002)

Cognitive Way of Knowing

In this analysis, the cognitive function, as a way of knowing and performed/expressed through the arts, includes all the processes through which we, as human organisms, become aware of the environment or of our own consciousness (Eisner, 2002). The cognitive function is viewed as a way of organizing and representing perceptions and frames of references and as a way of knowing the self through one's thoughts, ideas, symbol-making, and use of metaphors (Booth, 1999; Eisner, 2002). One cognitive function that the arts perform is to help us learn to notice the world, read the world (apprehend), and create worlds of meaning (world-making) (Booth, 1999; Eisner, 2002).

This perspective aligns with Jungian depth psychology, in which the thinking function is viewed as one of the four basic ego functions,³ with thinking as one of two means of making judgments about experience (Jung, 1969). From a perspective of depth psychology, judging experience is a rational, objective activity in that it requires making a decision based on how an experience affects you, others, or your personal, subjective values (a function often mistaken for the function of feeling- a function that tells us whether or not we like the facts and how we prioritize respective facts, assigning them a indicator of value, as portrayed in the Affective Analysis).

³ According to Jung, thinking, feeling, sensation, and intuition are four basic ego functions which serve to perceive information in development of Self.

Cognitive Analysis 1: Christine

"I never thought of it that way." Christine

Christine, a 32 year-old mother of a 3 year-old son, awaiting an imminent divorce, decided she needed to complete her bachelor degree in order to create a stable future for herself and her son. She registered for the course in art, collage and imagination following a student advisory that laid out the progression of her bachelor completion. She was labile and quick to tear. She feared her future while simultaneously longing for freedom from a self-described "fairy-tale" marriage that could not mature, even with professional assistance. As a young adult quickly thrust into adult responsibilities, Christine's world was influxing and rapidly changing. Christine's affective expressions were quite raw and just below the surface, despite a veneer of composure and her swift ability to recompose.

Christine's life was in the throes of disorienting change but it took on an even more confusing spin when, at the first class, she realized that she was in an art class. Despite careful portrayal of the course, she had interpreted collage and imagination as a creative writing class. She told the group that she was "scared to death," claiming she could not draw, was not creative, but she liked to cook. At first, Christine's emotional vulnerability and affective expressions belied her cognitive ability to re-conceptualize and reframe a situation. More spot-on than she realized, she gamely quipped, "Maybe collage is like cooking." Through the analogy of cooking, Christine found a familiar frame of reference through which to initially conceptualize collage and signaled her ability for metaphoric thinking.



For the assignment, *Create a Vessel*, Christine constructed an orange sailboat , the S.S. Tyler (named for her son and constructed from his milk carton, a straw and his craft papers) in full green sail - a color chosen to communicate "go-go-go!" The sailboat was thoughtfully outfitted with a red pail filled with collections of rocks and shells, harkening to beaches as precious sites of tranquility, inspiration and relational communion with her son and her own aspirations. Christine had often watched sailboats from the comfort of a favorite beach and yearned for the experience of their freedom and grace - "the ability to chose whether to put up the sail and let it take me to where it will or to direct it to the place where I want it to go." A library of books to represent her journey into education lined the aft behind a beautiful woman-doll, who stood alert behind the helm. An anchor was connected to the aft. Christine, who one week earlier totally disclaimed any creativity, announced, "I'm very proud of myself. Art is fun. This is fun. There is more to art than stick figures."

Christine was surprised by her playful, naive, child-like artfulness and ability to communicate visually through a symbolic visual image. An assumption about her creativity shifted. She saw and received affirmation from her classmates that she

was capable of creative, symbolic expression; that her whimsical, child-like sailboat was an effective means of communicating her "transformation to Captain of her own destiny."

The cognitive conceptualization of a sailboat as a simultaneous image of emotional containment (a vessel) and an energetic symbol of life-change and movement had the effect of stabilizing Christine's affective expressions about her distressful and disorienting life changes. She became energized and excited. She wrote: "I am now experiencing what it feels like to be on course, to have direction and focus that has been missing for a long time. I was tired of going in circles."



At the onset of the collage assignments, Christine was convinced she would make a mess because, as she reminded us, she is "not very creative." The changed assumption about her creative ability during the first week was obviously not stable. In recognition of that fact, she created Collage #1, *Impediment/Inner Critic*, depicting an internalized self-criticizing voice, a voice of judgment and diminishment. She visually narrated a 6-year-old girl in pigtails standing before three easels of child art, innocently and eagerly anticipating a response to her art project. A cigar-smoking, crude, gun-toting woman demands "What's up?" and

then declares **"There's no beauty here!"** as a visual and textual narrative of an aggressive, insensitive, impeding thought process to any expression of creativity and individuality. Christine was shocked to stand back and observe the external representation of her very familiar, but intangible thought process. She claimed "I never thought of it that way." Christine discovered an unconscious aspect of herself that was simultaneously edictal and freeing.

Through the concept of collage, when asked about the white space, both as the foundation of the collage and the in-between spaces of the images, Christine quickly conceptualized possible disconnection between the imagistic elements - each image stands alone and apart, out of her control. She also saw incompleteness. She began to see the white space as opportunity for creating a connection between self-elements and as surface space to communicate something more, something different, something new. She "filed the concepts in a new creative folder in her head for the next collage." She knew immediately what she wanted to do with Collage #2, *Free Exploration*, and jumped right into the assignment.



Christine chose a foundation that was purposefully twice as large as the offered basic form because she had "a lot to portray." Expanding the perimeters of the canvas was evidence of shifts and growth in her cognitive functioning. Christine's work flow was simultaneously deliberated and experimental. She set up a model template on which she organized the images but she was frustrated that she could not find an adequate sunset image to portray the colors of the flaming sun, a symbol of inspiration and peace. With prompting, she quickly grasped the concept of abstraction through layering multiple sun colors, metallic sheens and multiple textures instead of using an actual picture. Christine was thrilled to both see and feel the sunset in what became a new foundation of her collage. Christine successfully made a transition from literal to abstract representation. That aesthetic choice also solved her challenge of dealing with in-between space. Color became a unifying, integrative element between her multiple elements of Collage #2. The peacefulness and inspiration that Kelly felt when she watched sunsets on the beach was now represented in her collage.

The center of the collage #2 was an (unintentional) heart-shape of a tree, with the viewer's perspective mysteriously and seemingly coming from within the trunk. Christine had not seen this but when the class observed this as their viewer's perspective, Christine's vision shifted. She took deep comfort and inspiration from that view. She felt like she had inadvertently created another vessel experience - a safe, containing place - an internal space in addition to finding a new perspective of the world, her world. The latter may be an example of unintentional spiritual awakening through both the relational and sensorial realms. Christine did not state it as such, and no one pursued it.

But mostly, Christine liked the images of the confident strong-faced women in her collage - one looking in the mirror and seeing herself, and another with hair

blowing freely and confidently in the wind. Christine derived and demonstrated an augmented idea of her Self through the inclusion of these images.



Christine's final project was embodied collage through cooking and performative assemblage. Harkening back to her original conceptualization of collage, she made six pizzas with progressive layers and toppings to demonstrate work flow, features and attributes of collage in cooking. While the class communally munched on the pizzas, she proceeded to portray her growth and change through construction of an abstract representation of change in the assemblage of a new vessel, this one in glass - transparent, strong, and vulnerable. As she depicted a modern fairy tale of a princess marrying her girlhood prince and the whole myth collapsing beneath her, she ceremoniously filled the glass vessel with six layers of colored sand, each color symbolizing an important stage or moment of her growth in self-awareness and consciousness. As Christine created the large orange upper layer, which she labeled as her son, Tyler, she pressed in a deep concave, a maternal vessel space, over which she filled and topped with a "go-go-go!" green sand layer, labeled herself and her new life.

While Christine entered the course through an affective portal, through processes of framing, reframing her feeling values, and significant amounts of emotional expression, she demonstrated multiple examples of meaning-making

through cognitive perceptions and symbol-making. She quickly conceptualized the concept of collage and demonstrated capacity to abstract it towards a way of being, thinking and living. She demonstrated change in cognitive representation from literal to abstract and symbolic. She shifted her Self perception as "totally uncreative" to a person capable of creative expression. She developed recognition of an under-lying negative self-thought which provided her with a new frame of reference about her self-concept. She demonstrated ability to create a mental concept of vessel as a containing, self-organizing, protective, protected, and generative space which she created several times, including one for her son.

Christine's transformation in cognitive perception took hold in the five weeks of creative exploration of imagination and creativity. But she is vulnerable. During her final performative collage-making, Christine's voice occasionally choked and she would turn to me to read a few sentences until she recollected herself to continue. We passed her paper back and forth a few times until she burst out laughing and finished successfully on her own. Bolstered by the relational and new trust in a purposive expression of affect, Christine demonstrated cognitive transformation far beyond what she had imagined entering "an art class."

Cognitive Analysis 2: Anita

"I change my mind." Anita

Anita, a 38 year-old, Insurance systems-analyst, and wife of a Baptist minister, finally carved out time and energy to complete her bachelor degree in business. She presented as quiet, pleasant and politely reluctant. She was in a confounding dilemma. Her business class had been cancelled and she was in the imagination and creativity art class by default because she wanted to keep pace with her scheduled degree completion. Anita stated she was a business woman to whom a class in imagination and creativity was "just not appealing". She was emphatic that not only did she "lack creative bones in her body" but that she was always in a compression tank of time. Should she withdraw and lose time on her plans to get a degree or should she stay in her dilemma and experience "God knows what"? Anita soon had the class in stitches with her deep-voiced, dry, self-deprecating humor, and the comic, desperate, perhaps classic, course-enrollment-dilemma in which she found herself. Even though the class enthusiastically telegraphed encouragement and empathy, she murmured, "I don't know about this. You're going to have to convince me." I wondered if she would even return to the second class.



Anita returned. For the assignment, *Create a Vessel*, she constructed a miniature room replete with a miniature bed, bureau, pillows, digital television, carpeting, a Bible, and pictures of her family, all captured in a space labeled '**Anita's Sanctuary**'. Watching her niece construct a self-soothing, comforting teddy bear at 'Build-A-Bear' ⁴ had triggered an idea in Anita. She could construct an adult version of comfort for herself. She transformed the 'Build-A-Bear' box into a representation of precious, private space, which she deeply values and needs. She wrote in her reflection paper: "My vessel is the place where I feel safe, secure and most importantly, it belongs to me. The place where I go to find solace, peace and tranquility, the place I run to when I don't want to be disturbed so that I can think or plan or simply contemplate life's events. It is not a place for any and everyone - an invitation is a must. It is a place where I can dream, reflect and recharge." These are the building blocks which Anita brought into class.

Anita experimented with creative process through materials of everyday and familial life, while simultaneously doing her "academic duty." Her face beamed with surprise and pleasure when her classmates enthused over the interpretive success, charm and appeal of the vessel representation. They all stated they wanted one, symbolically and in reality, for their lives. Anita had inadvertently imagined and symbolized, perhaps, the most necessary vessel of all for busy women, an inner private sanctuary.

⁴ Build-A-Bear is a retail franchise at which customers may construct, embellish and dress a teddy care according to their own desire. The bears are replete with a shopping box which functions both as a shopping bag and a storage place for the teddy bears.



Anita's disorientation emerged, however, portrayed in both cognitive and affective confusion. The next week, Anita was over-stimulated with the materials in the studio and she admitted to feeling flat at the start of class. I contemplated that Anita was both a weary adult learner and perhaps emotionally shut-down to manage the unfamiliarity in which she found herself.

Collage assignment #1, *Impediment/Inner Critic*, was daunting for Anita but she was at least certain that time was her impediment: "Time is the thing that hinders me, the one thing that there never seems to be enough of so that I can do the things that are expected of me, and also pursue the things that I want to do." Anita wrote that she is dogged by an internal script, "You don't have time for that" to which she laments, "Where do I find time to do all the things that are expected of me?" But she was unsure how to represent this underlying thought process in a collage and was utterly convinced of her lack of imagination to figure it out. Her negative internal, cognitive script was an impediment to idea formation.

With the timed exercise pressing on her, she decided to just literally portray what was required of her - "things that eat up all my time" - expectations, refinery,

beauty, traditions. Each idea was distinctly depicted in symbolic images, spaced separate and apart on the collage, floating over a vacuous, light, white background. There was a certain lushness and formality to the collection of images in the gold tones and silky, satin fabrics, white frostings and white flowers. One orange color block with sculptural white flowers stood out - distinct and separate, lively and vibrant, individualistic and rebellious - Anita liked that her fellow students noticed it, and called it such. Anita perked up with a grin of acknowledgement. This was a significant acknowledgement for Anita. Students need to be seen and accepted for their authenticity. Sometimes authenticity emerges so obscurely, it can almost be missed. The bright color orange became a portal to further self-exploration.



For Collage #2, *Free Exploration*, Anita continued with the theme of time - feeling and exploring the compression of time and expectations in daily life and in real time with the collage assignment. She now changed her white background to a field of energetic, vibrant colors. She depicted both external expectations and her personal desires through images and prayerful text. Then just as she began to organize the collage, she once again found herself running out of time and was not be able to complete it as she would have liked. In what might

appear, at first, as familiar compromise or perhaps a burst of surrender and acquiescence, she threw up her hands, quickly glued on the images, and added the text **Just do it** on a banner of the feisty, vibrant color orange. An image which Anita described as a "self-determined woman with attitude" was affixed front and center.

Anita tapped into multiple ways of knowing throughout the class. In her response paper, she stated while she was not particularly interested in the making of collages during class, she found herself continually thinking about Collage #2 during the following week, including ideas and ways that would have helped her better display how to get the most of what hinders her. Between classes, she began to integrate her experiences in class to her work and personal life. She adroitly told her fellow classmates, "This class kind of sticks on you and I am going to remember it for a long, long time." Once again, Anita was referencing time, but here, "time is a friend, not an enemy," providing her with perspective and the possibility of longitudinal reflection and integration instead of in-the-moment protective and reactive responses.

Some kind of lethargy or resistance shifted into action. Anita became behaviorally activated to problem-solve within her own life through the self-admonition to "just do it." Anita also demonstrated the ability to extend her transforming cognition into daily life - a cognitive skill of transfer of learning - an objective of adult education (Knowles, 2005). She conceptualized how the work and discipline of artists is the same as the work of any professional - just though a different medium. She found herself "looking at the way I perform certain tasks at work, and how I can be more creative and how I can mature some of my amateur abilities. This is also one of the reasons I decided to return to school, so that I could learn more and mature my skills."



The Goldsworthy movie, *Rivers and Tides*, provided Anita with an artistic focus - nature - which she calls “God’s work of art.” In response to her perceived need to speed up, she found herself paradoxically slowing down to take walks, noticing nature, especially gardens, to clear her mind and just be a part of it. For her final project, *Free Exploration*, Anita sought to “capture some of nature’s beauty and splendor in a garden.” She created an assemblage called “**Tranquility Garden**” – a miniature garden-scape with miniature grass, flowers and pots, garden tools, a worm, and a rock path leading up to a miniature garden fountain. In her final paper, Anita stated: “Tranquility Garden is a place where God’s artwork is on display, a meditative place to go and look at natural beauty.” Anita opened herself and her creative process to others through this project. “Tranquility Garden, unlike my private Sanctuary which required an invitation, is a place for one and all to come and gaze upon the beauty in nature.” The pinnacle of her presentation was pushing a button to start the sound of flowing water in the miniature fountain, which elicited gasps of delight from the class and a final burst of applause.

Through the disorientation of a course in imagination and creativity, Anita augmented her sense of self and cognitive agency by discovering creative

process. Anita had heretofore thought of art as something she purchased or something others do, but she began to see that “there also is an artist in me.” She was activated by the idea to notice and investigate the ordinary in life. The aesthetic appreciation that “There is nothing so ordinary in an ordinary day that it doesn’t warrant some meaningful investigation” (Booth, 1999) aligned with her spiritual values to “appreciate the least in life, as well as the bountiful” (explored also in Spiritual Analysis).

Anita was a weekly portrayal of overcoming resistance to new cognitive perceptions and fear of the unfamiliar. Anita experienced intense confrontation with her own assumptions about imagination, creative process, art and time. While she experienced the creative process as confounding, frightening, alien, and massively cognitively and affectively disorienting, her aesthetic expression was succinct, clever and compelling. Anita's resistance was strong but perhaps somewhat of a red herring because even though most adult learners are typically time-pressed, when Anita began to respond to the assignments and create solutions to her own problems, she made profound cognitive shifts to her assumptions, asked different questions, and came up with different perspectives for her life. The discovery that she was capable of constructing new ideas and self-perceptions through creative engagement was revelatory to Anita. Anita is happy she stayed in the class. She stated: “Learning how to learn is the ultimate goal of education. I feel I reached that ultimate goal. I have learned and received an education here.”

Creativity can be contagious, and ironically, while Anita had originally challenged the class to change her mind, she is passing on the contagion she experienced in class. In her reflection paper, she said, “My talking about the class has also sparked an interest from those around me. As they listen to my experience about the things I have learned and created for this class, it has inspired them to become more creative.” It might appear that conversion begets conversion.

Cognitive Analysis 3: Leah

A new idea: "I am more than my past." Leah

Sometimes there is so much happening in a student's learning experience that it is extremely difficult to parse out the dynamic, interacting, kaleidoscopic movements of all the ways of knowing that are operating simultaneously with a deeply engaged student. Such was the situation with Leah, an artful and creative (yet disclaiming both), 24 year-old woman, and a heroin addict in recovery two years, nine months.

Leah told a narrative of hidden teenage heroin addiction - a story of an affluent, middle class North Shore family whose youngest daughter broke the mold of drug addicts depicted in newspapers and seen on the streets of east coast, North Shore towns and cities. She looked like a stereotypical socially and economically privileged North Shore bright, beautiful, "girl next door" who commuted to a prestigious private school in another town. No one, including her family, saw (until it was almost too late) her slippage into an increasingly dark, life-threatening experience of heroin addiction. It took years of progressive interventions and learning for Leah to change her life to chemical-free functioning. Now, as a young adult in recovery, she is constructing a life for herself while trying to catch up to developmental, emotional, relational, and cognitive learning and skills that were disrupted and unevenly formed during an important development stage (Erickson, 1959).

Leah was aware of all of this and acknowledged living in a 'no-place space', a place she referred to as 'in-between everything'. She could not hang with her old drug-using crowd, she felt it would be unwise to disclose her history at work, she did not know where to meet non-using friends, and everywhere she went, drugs

and alcohol were social stimulants - in public, after work, on TV. She felt she fit nowhere. Traditional college, also, was no longer a social or emotional option for her but Leah wanted a college education. While on the young end of the adult learning spectrum, Leah was reconstructing a life that now included a non-traditional adult learning educational track.⁵

By this time, into her third year of recovery, Leah felt capable of and eager to participate in the breadth of engagement that this art course in imagination and creativity might incite. Leah's engagement can be tracked along every way of knowing, depicted in this analysis as follows, but with emphasis on cognitive and affective areas. Such was the depth and breadth of her engagement and her commitment to recovery and to learning. The reason her transformation story is depicted under cognitive is because it was the cognitive frame that helped organize the other frames into a comprehensible whole.

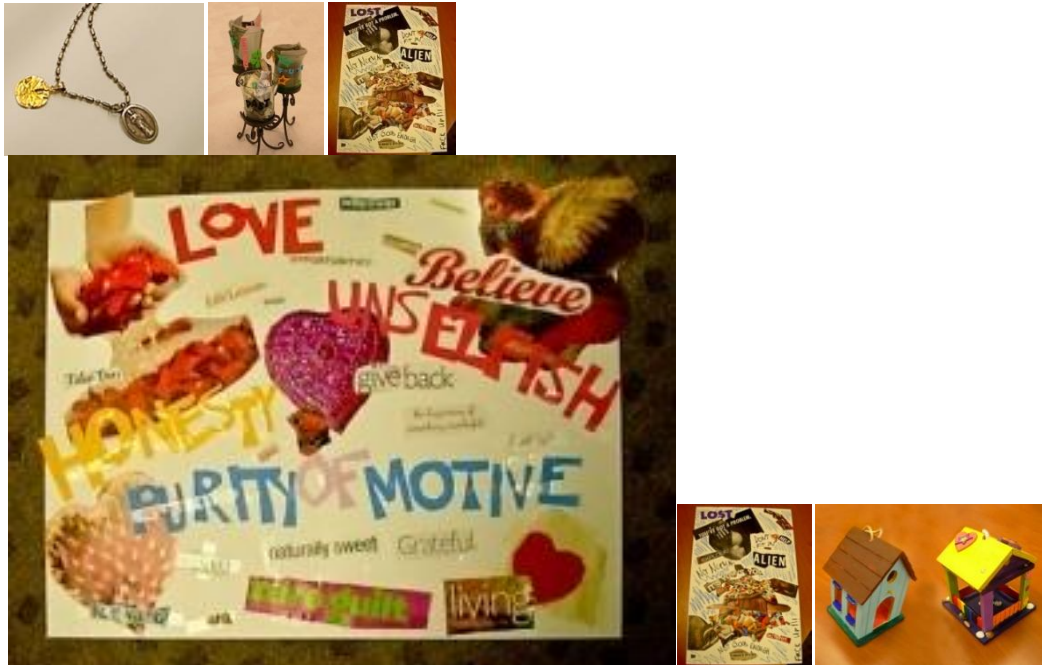


⁵ While addiction is not the focus within this research and analysis, it is valuable for educators to keep in mind that at any point in time, there may be recovering addicts in their classrooms, a factor which may impact a student's engagement with learning. Over time, no matter what recovery philosophy one adheres to, addiction recovery requires reparation and development in multiple ways of knowing, including cognitive, affective, sensory, relational and spiritual. The first year of addiction recovery is typically focused on cognitive reframing and toleration of arousal and affect without self-medication.

In response to Collage #1, *Impediment/Inner Critic*, Leah announced: "I don't feel I am very good at expressing myself with symbols". Nevertheless, she effectively expressed her internal reality with both literal and symbolic representation. Leah used images to portray how, through drug addiction, "she was her biggest problem", how she was her own impediment to life, to creativity, to anything. A lethargic woman on a bed of pills that look appealing as candy is surrounded by image fragments depicting a world of despair. Select text fragments added to her story of addiction – **"you've got a problem, not good enough, lost, don't fit in, alien, not normal, help, explode, destroyer, f*ck up, it's you vs. you."** Suffer was included in tinier print. The expressive and aesthetic choice to use scrabbly, zig-zagging crayon to fill the in-between white spaces created an electric, felt sense of desperation and of emotional, neurological jolting and jaggging.

Leah is experimenting with defining and creating, in her words, "a new normal". While this was a depiction of her past, she still struggles with trying to learn what is normal because she is not sure what is normal. While determining what is normal is an indeterminable, unending philosophical debate in culture, it is especially so for Leah as her emotional development was truncated by the use of drugs.

As a recovering addict, Leah also lives with a new and different experience of relational isolation. She fears being fired, shunned by new friends, and she wants to show her parents she is moving on. She cannot freely talk about herself. She told the women, "There are not many places that I can say 'this is me.'" Daily, she counters a haunting inner script that tells her she is "not good enough." In her response paper, Leah wrote, "I destroyed a lot of peoples' lives, and I hurt my family." She is not only "not good enough", but she is also (in her own mind) responsible for other's pain and lack of goodness and joy in life.



It was easy for Leah to collage the inner critic, but Leah found it hard to get started on Collage #2, *Free Exploration*, because she was feeling thick awfulness at having revisited her history so directly. She stated that the inner critic is harsh and dominant and "screams at me during various points through the day. After Collage #1, in her reflection paper, Leah described how she feels inundated by negativity, not just from her inner critic but also from habitual complaining of friends. She wonders: "Why do they (we) do this? When did we stop looking at things with child-like wonder and start being cold, cynical adults who rarely allow joy into our everyday lives? How have our minds become trained to notice all that is bad in the world while the good is just passed over?"

Modulating mood is a challenge for Leah. But Leah has learned to cognitively reframe her emotional experiences - to "find the positive in every negative" and she approached this art project as no different. She quickly translated the idea that art is everywhere in life, waiting to be noticed, to exemplify her mantra in text - the four principles around which she tries to live in recovery : **Love, Honesty, Unselfishness, and Purity of Motive**. She declared that these principles, too, are

everywhere, waiting to be noticed. The latter portrays, in particular, the transformational affect through the cognitive frame in formulation of words and through speech and text.

Leah was immediately drawn to thick, brightly colored paper and started cutting each letter for each word "since they came from within me - not the pages of a magazine". The cutting of each letter was exacting and provided time and means by which to reshape the mood into which she had slipped. "As I cut each letter, my mood, which had gotten a little dark from building my first collage, started to lift. More and more ideas came into my head of what I could say, the other side of me that I could show my classmates. Once the letters were shaped, words and symbols jumped out at me from the magazines." Her collage became a bold field of interconnected words and texts on a now clear white background. She extracted particular pleasure in an image of cupped hands lifting Rachel petals out of water. "**Take two**" text gave her permission for abundance. Someone associated it with a cleansing, healing, water ritual. Leah basked in the experience of her collage and the bounty of encouragement the class bestowed upon her. She noted the impact of words and images on her classmate's feelings, too: ""By the end of class I was in a great mood and I think my classmates felt the same. It's interesting how speaking or reading certain words and seeing images can affect how we feel. I think a lot of people focus on the negative."

Collage #2 reinforced Leah's desire to continue on the path of living-for-the-moment and taking time to notice all the good around her: "It only takes practice and attention. I'm dedicated to seeing it through every day until it comes as naturally as noticing the negative was before."



For her final project, *Free Exploration*, Leah made two birdhouses because she wanted to portray her changed concepts of safety and risk. She conceptualized a birdhouse as "a safe place and at the same time a place where risks are taken because every time you go to take flight, you risk falling to the ground." The blue birdhouse represents how Leah would have approached this project prior to taking this class. She described it as a traditional birdhouse, bland, with some interesting features, but no flair. The class chuckled at her definition of bland because they agreed unilaterally the blue birdhouse was colorful, charming and fetching. However, in constructivist learning environments, it is essential to ask for meaning. Aesthetics is subjective - one person's perception beauty may be another person's description of bland. Leah's birdhouse was aesthetically deceptive in appearance, just like her teenage persona and addiction had been to everyone in her life.

The blue birdhouse represented a point of change for Leah. She ritualistically transferred one black stone, an artifact, from her vessel project to the blue birdhouse, thereby creating a performative, collagic, connective element

representing past to future, darkness to light. She also used color to represent change, adding that "The interior is painted pink because despite the bland exterior, there is something heating up inside." She portrayed moving from despair to the anticipation of new life.

Building the second bird house was a completely different experience. Leah demonstrates numerous areas of shifting, changing ideas, perceptions, and feelings. Leah gave herself permission to just let ideas flow, to just have fun with it. Birdhouse #2 (open for lightness, painted with riotous colors, including a yellow roof) shows "how I now approach creative endeavors with, to quote Diaz, 'an awareness of the sensations of living, and an appreciation of being alive.'" Although each feature has personal meaning, she experimented with Goldsworthy's statement that "total control can be the death of a work." A happy accident of not screwing the cross beams in tight enough resulted in rotating, spinning cross beams upon which she texted her mantras - **Love, Honesty, Unselfishness and Purity of Motivation**. The opposite banner/beams stated: **Strong, Hopeful, Happy, and Fearless** - each text a repetition and reinforcement to her previous collage texts. She had appropriated Goldsworthy's observation about not being too controlling with art work to her carpentry skills, and she now had an assemblage with which she could pleasantly and joyfully interact.

Leah demonstrated ability to cognitively transfer artist concepts to her recovery process through the idea that a canvas, or as she extrapolates, in her case, the birdhouse and the fence, doesn't hold artists back but gives them a concrete area to work with and to push the limits within that capacity. Leah stated: "Even though freedom is important, at the same time, so are boundaries and guidelines to follow."

Leah's transformational experiences are exemplified in multiple ways of knowing. She began the class stating that she was not creative, and by the end,

demonstrated capacity for imaginative conceptualization and aesthetic appreciation. In her final paper, she read: "I don't want to say that I necessarily like the way my 'creative' birdhouse looks, but I do love it in its own way. I put a lot of effort into it, and to me, it looks like something someone who is on their way to becoming less inhibited would create. It does look a bit childish, but I'm not the most mature person in the world so that's okay." In the last minute, Leah edited her statement to aesthetic appreciation. "No, I do love how it looks. It may not be perfect or the way I had pictured it when I started, but the process was amazing, which is pretty much the definition of my life story." The course resonated with latent processes already at work within her.

In addition to her own symbols and meaningful representations, she incorporated features of her classmate's symbols - shells, the sea, fences, even a color as a final gesture of relational appreciation to her classmates. The stacked hearts on the roof top were recognition of the layers of love, support and acceptance she felt "being piled on me in the last few weeks. It has not gone unnoticed and will never be forgotten." An affirming, caring, class environment provided her with a place to express what she could not express elsewhere. The level of honesty that the class honored and valued, took, what she called, "a weight off my shoulders". The class's warm, relational, reception was encouraging and she learned her anticipatory fears were for nothing. Leah learned how women of varying ages and life situations can share different feelings, opinions, and that she was capable of appreciating every single woman. She could step outside of herself to see what someone else is missing in their life. Leah demonstrated an augmented expression of empathy and ability to step outside of a habitually addicted, self-centered way of being.

Leah tended to create artwork and to conceptualize in pairs and categories of representation (multiple vessels, talismans (see Spiritual Analysis), collages, final project) - always working on an experience of balance in between ways of

knowing, with particular attention to cognitive and emotional terms. Leah learned that while perceptions are gathered and accumulated, we can change perceptions through ongoing experiences. Leah strongly grasped the collagic concept that we accumulate more and more layers of perceptions and experience, and occasionally come up with some kind of comprehensible whole, for the moment, perhaps. Tolerating the time between moments is a challenge to a person in recovery. Leah worked her thoughts, ideas, feeling values, and emotions in careful consideration of what would maintain her cognitive, emotional and behavioral stability and agency. Leah was very adept at thinking, re-thinking, framing, re-framing, extrapolating ideas, and making meaning through symbolic expression which strongly supported her emotional responses and her feeling values of authenticity, honesty, love, and purity of motivation. Leah's transformational learning was expressed in cognitive congruity to affective feeling values with the new life she was developing.

In response to the final assignment, *Free Expression*, Leah's first paragraph in her final paper and her opening statement to the class was full of positive "I" statements - a tribute to the transformational power of art practice. "I have never been so touched by a class in my life. I am more than my past. I am able to make meaningful connections with other people - let alone women of all ages who I had previously thought would be the hardest to win over. I can notice art all around me if I only open my eyes to it. I am happy."

Affective Way of Knowing

*in spite of my long
illness, I feel
immense joy
in
LIVING*

Freida Kahlo

Art creates a portal and means of exploring our interior landscapes. When the arts genuinely move us, we discover what it is that we are capable of experiencing. In this sense, the arts help us discover the contours of our emotional selves (Eisner, 2002). In this analysis, an affective way of knowing portrays the expression of emotions related to a wide range of emotions - including positive, negative, welcome, unwelcome, disturbing, joyful, sad, anxious, or even lack of feeling. In this sense, an affective way of knowing provides resources for recognizing and expressing a range and variety of affect. In this analysis, the affective realm particularly provides evidence of disorientation students may feel in the class on imagination and creativity.

In this analysis, an affective way of knowing also aligns with Jungian depth psychology, in which the feeling function is viewed as one of the four basic ego functions ^(footnote) with feeling as a second means (besides thinking) of making judgments and decisions about experience - a function that tells us whether or not we like the facts (Jung, 1969). From a perspective of depth psychology, judging experience through one's feelings is a rational, though subjective, activity in that it requires making a decision based on how an experience affects you, others, or your personal, subjective hierarchy of values.

Affective Analysis 1: Diane

"What have I gotten myself into?" Diane

Diane recently returned to school to complete a near-finished degree that she abandoned years ago to raise her family. Now that she was over fifty and her children were successfully launched, she felt the need to fill her "empty nest" with her own growth and development. She was also a business/office manager in a large and successful alternative retirement community and she was told she needed a degree to qualify for promotion. Despite, or because of these compelling internal and external motivators, she was extremely nervous. She discussed her degree-completion ambitions with high anxiety and performance worry. Without giving specifics, she expressed a deeply internalized belief of not being smart enough for college despite having successfully already earned over three-fourths of her credits. She also alluded to recent workplace trauma through surviving a protracted hostile work environment that had ultimately resulted in the firing of her boss, but the impact of the experience was pervasive and deep.

Diane knew that she was insecure, anxious, and was still living out of perceived threat to her well-being while simultaneously declaring that she had done a great job learning how to manage stress with professional help and self-determination. With one elective to go before embarking on her thesis requirements, Diane joined the class on imagination and creativity because her business class was cancelled. While emphatically declaring that she was not creative, she was relieved and excited to know two classmates on the roster. She was also familiar with me as a professor and she thought maybe the class would be fun and a pleasant reprieve.



Diane signaled a number of indicators of deep stress. She was so nervous she occasionally slipped into talking about herself in the third person, thereby creating some emotional distance from her own self. In class, she occasionally spurted out loud, "What have I gotten myself into?" She frequently left at the opportunity to get her presentations over with first so she could admittedly relax, observe, and take in the rest of the presentations. It is typical of someone with anxiety or even light trauma history to momentarily disassociate, lack words and experience difficulty in feeling expression in their communication and relational styles (Ratey, 2001).

But Diane has narrative gifts and she quickly found her stride through storytelling - adding words to her images. In response to the "*Make a vessel*" assignment, she constructed a nostalgic assemblage recollecting childhood family camping experiences in Maine and humorously enthusing over simpler, happier times. She constructed a canoe from brown felt and filled it with emblematic ephemera - a pine branch, a photograph announcing the campsite, a gum wrapper she had saved over the decades, a replication of her red sleeping bag, and a leather wristband she had made and worn. She longed for the

experience with nostalgia and pride. "My childhood was simple and easy. Life was simple and easy then. I will cherish these memories for the rest of my life." Through harkening back and grounding herself in a happy, stable, unburdened time and memory of life, Diane created a vessel that protected herself in a perceived precarious, threatening situation.



However, when encountering the assignment of Collage #1 - to depict her *Impediment/Inner Critic* - Diane rolled her eyes and again lamented, "What have I gotten myself into?" In her reflection paper, Diane stated she was overwhelmed at seeing the classroom reconfigured as a studio with numerous materials. She wrote, "I am not one to experiment so I chose safe magazine pictures and a few pieces of fabrics."

Despite her trepidation and verbal protestations, Diane constructed a collage of sophisticated composition and effective minimalism - an image inviting contemplation. Her impediment - **Stress** - was graphically textured and arched over her collage. Tiny script included: **chain, stress, loss, alienism.**

The visual portrayal of her inner impediment, however, was too potent for Diane for continued direct observation. She was visibly agitated throughout and after its construction. In the last minute, she diffused her agitation with an interactive, sheer, filament overlay that could be lifted and lowered, "as a shade" with viewer control to more fully reveal or diffuse the impact. She shared: "I am like hiding behind it."



For Collage #2, "*Free Exploration*", and perhaps stepping back into retreat, Diane invoked a nostalgic collection of personalized, humorous memories and caricatures of the seventies - an era, that for her, again represented no stress and anxiety despite what the class recalled as a cultural era of heaving social change. The collage was texturally and textually thick and rich with words and images grouped over a woody, textured background (invoking similarity to her initial vessel). Harkening to embodied memories of nature restored Diane's optimism and humor.

During the critiques, Diane expressed that she was surprised and very pleased to be able to speak of her "past personal struggles", but at the end she continuously

stated she hated Collage #1. She kept obliquely referring to her impactful, distressed history with stress. When the class ended, she dramatically threw it in the waste basket. She did not want its physical presence or visual memory in her home. She announced that she was very pleased with her act of assertion and self-control as she left the studio classroom.

Constructing a collage is a powerful experience, especially if the creator feels vulnerable. The experience of hiding, holding back - an inhibitor to wonderful expressions is often a private experience. The collage made Diane's emotional realm visible. Vulnerability may both increase and dissipate with sharing. Sharing takes time and courage. In her reflection paper, Diane stated: "As I look back on this, my class members allowed me to publicly verbalize my pain for the first time and it was emotionally invigorating and draining at the same time." Diane added it was not until a few days later that she realized the large impact the class was having on her.



For her final presentation Diane presented a surprising and evocative image in the imagistic recreation of her father's boots - a retired fireman whom she

admires as a hero - but whose insensitive remark about her youthful college potential (which she finally verbalized) had imprinted shame and insecurity about her academic ability over the years and resulted in a feeling of inadequacy and a life-time of yearning. She created fireman's boots out of felt, texturized by a background of matches in an attempt to symbolize her perspective change about that life-defining conversation while also signifying passions and fires that still exist within her. "The burned lower half symbolizes the many fires my father has literally extinguished. The live matches at the top symbolize the many goals and experiences I look forward to achieving and creating." ⁶ Amazingly, Diane was not cemented in blame. She acknowledged her perception of their exchange as a "reason or perhaps even an excuse" for not finishing her education years ago. In so doing, Diane demonstrated tolerance and cognitive ability to entertain multiple interpretations to an emotionally-charged conversation and memory. It began to appear that Diane's affective experience in the course was a shift of a long-held assumption which was ready to change. Her artful engagement and emotional wrestling created the final push to change and transformation, an affective shift of an assumption.

Diane confessed that she had not thought she would continue after the first class. She did not think she could succeed. But despite continually wondering what she had gotten into, she stated she felt the class positively intensified her feelings about her life experiences, a distinctive state of feeling judgment and evaluation.

Diane also absorbed the concept that life, like imagination and creativity, is an on-going experiment. "Life is filled with experiences and experiments, and art, too, is a series of experiences and experiments. The experience of making art is hard, sloppy, messy and very

⁶ The matches had been laboriously deactivated - one by one, in safe circumstances - a fact which the entire class sought to ensure!

unpredictable. Being aware of the process of creation is the point of the class. Doing all of this made me both aware and more open to all kinds of experiments and experiences around me."

Diane's final project suggests multiple unexplored meanings and possible interpretations, but most importantly, Diane made a connection between her early yearning to complete a college degree and yearning that fuels curiosity and persistence in life and in art. "The stresses of my life and the inability to believe in myself have held me back. My renewed capacity for my educational and personal growth has been reignited by this class. This surprising class helped to open my feelings, senses and awareness."

The class triggered anxiety and stressful memories in Diane, the very thing she later ironically acknowledged that she had worked so hard to get command over. It was an unexpected emotional disorientation and destabilization, something that can happen in any adult learning classroom. Stress, anxiety or memory of trauma can be triggered by seemingly innocuous, unrelated events. Given the potency of the arts to evoke and provoke emotional and sensorial response, it is not surprising to encounter strong affective responses in a classroom. While it was not an objective of this class, the artistic can be a portal to explore and express trauma, and if it emerges inadvertently, it must be respectfully and skillfully managed and de-escalated.

Diane enacted impressive emotional agency. When needed, she established and returned to light and happy times to re-ground herself. In the exploratory, but supportive and affirming environment of the class, she increasingly became capable of acknowledging her anxiety and self-doubts, and navigated between safety and risk, exposure and withdrawal to such an extent that she could be creatively expressive. The strongest evidence of transformation through the affective is depicted in the portrayal of her fireman-father's boots. Identifying with and assimilating bravery from her hero father, Diane was able to reach back

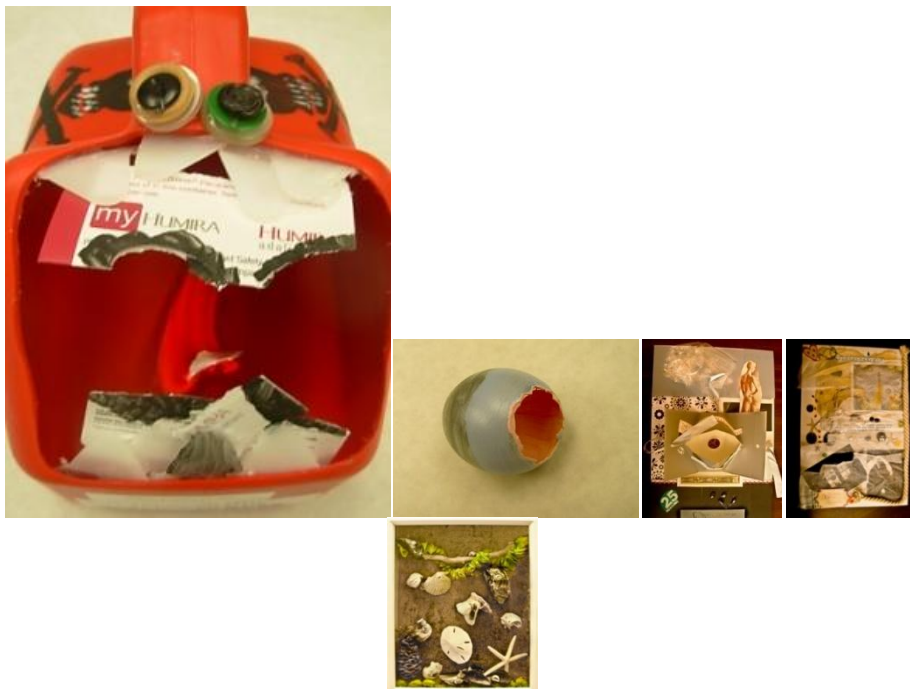
through time and cognitively re-construct their debilitating exchange about her collegiate potential and she was able to reclaim and re-frame her yearning and passion for fulfilling her goal of a college degree.

Affective Analysis 2: Emily

"Art is not just the good stuff you find in a museum, which can feel out of reach, but it is in part, the way the dance of life unfolds around us. At the completion of each project, I feel like I have rediscovered some lost part of me." Emily

Emily is a 38 year-old liberal arts student and an experienced events planner who lost an exciting and invigorating job at the onset of the current economic downturn. She now works as a marketer for a major pharmaceutical company and is highly motivated to start her degree completion as a means to secure a better job future.

Despite an infectious, ebullient, extraverted personality, Emily states she is increasingly unhappy. She introduced herself by saying: "Every day I do all this work with spreadsheets and numbers, and at the end I say, 'I'm glad my client is happy, but I didn't do anything today that made me happy. I don't have any creative outlet at work or in my personal life. I feel trapped in an uncreative job. I am in this class so I will get my creative juices flowing again.'"

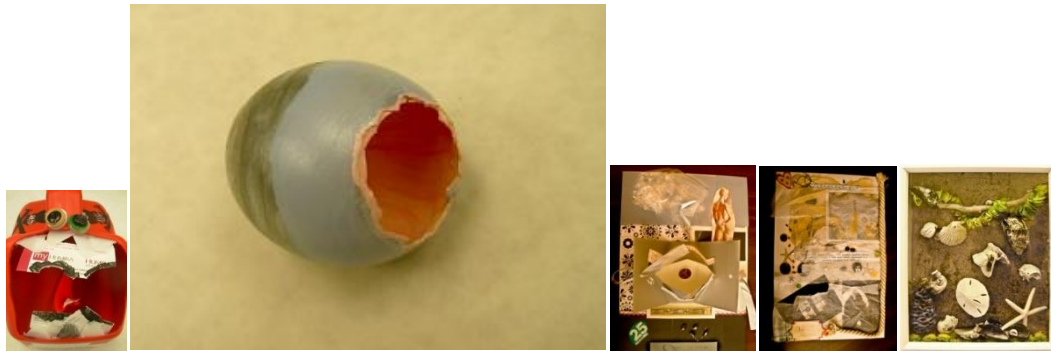


In response to the "*Make a Vessel*" assignment, Emily placed two vessels in front of her. She had an undeniable need to express how she felt devoured and depleted by her job and she engaged her imaginative skills right from the start. "Vessel #1 is my attempt to try to create something out of a marketing job that I don't really like." The vessel was a red monster-mouth deconstructed from a biohazard container for syringe sharps that her employer provides to their consumers. One of the numerous drugs they market is delivered in a syringe which cannot be casually disposed. The sharps container therefore cannot be thrown into common trash either. The program to process these materials is tedious and difficult, made even more so recently when the company changed procedures without adequately informing consumers. As a result, Emily receives the brunt of angry consumer calls: "I imagined the sharps container and the program as the monster that I feel it is - a green-eyed jealous monster. I often feel it is waiting around the corner to eat me alive. I put some of the drug verbiage in its mouth so that the hungry monster can devour it. I felt better. It was therapeutic!"

The monster vessel was humorous and outrageous in its deconstruction. The color red screamed for attention. Large ominous X's sat on its temples. Clear white plastic was repurposed as monstrous teeth. The googly eyes were crazy. A lapping tongue caught a piece of drug company verbiage and enlivened it. For Emily, it was cathartic and tension-releasing.

But the wider meaning and impact of Emily's vessel began to settle on the class when they realized these containers went first to Texas and then to China for unregulated disposal. Emily's portrayal of being consumed by work suddenly vaulted from personal interpretation of a devouring and destructive employment reality to an ecological, political portrayal of under-regulated industrial policies in the arena of world health. The sharps container was a vessel

of containment and protection for some but one of destruction and poison for others, particularly the children who scavenged through dumpsites for salvage garbage.



As if an antidote to the pharmaceutical, ecological work monster she portrayed, and with continued metaphoric and symbolic skill, Emily created a second vessel, Vessel #2- a delicate egg painted with hot pink "feminine insides", encased by gold and silver on the outside. Through this vessel, Emily spoke of passions, enthusiasms, safe havens, family love, all surrounded by, as Emily described, "optimism and hope, encased by a silver lining." While the class projectively saw a womb, a world egg, a cosmos, Emily talked about the exceeding fragility and remarkable durability of eggs in an expression of optimism and good-will. Eggs are full of protein, essential to all living cells, which she thought it was a fitting place to hold her feelings, her family, and all things that she valued for herself and the world.

"For a family to grow up strong, they must be given a home and love that will nurture them and provide them strength. A family holds each member safe but provides them the ability to go out into the world and discover themselves. One end of the egg is open to easily peer out and see what is going on outside of the egg. My family has cracked under pressure but we have remained whole despite the cracks. Through the fibrous structure of family protein we have been bound together to continue living through cracks and storms to come out on the other side where we can see the pink or silver lining."



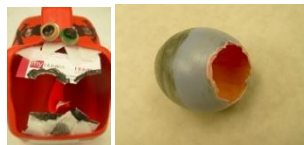
Emily had to travel for her job, so she completed the Collage assignments independently. She created collages that were densely filled with carefully chosen images, materials and embellishments, complex with multiple meanings and symbols. However, she chose to construct Collage #2 *Free Exploration* first because without the benefit of class support, she felt it would be easier to approach her passions without having the critic at her side. As indicated in the Methods chapter, exploring *Impediments/Inner Critic* is a potentially powerful assignment and destabilizing process. Emily felt a need to first create a positive image to buffer her feelings of vulnerability and exposure.

Emily's found great pleasure in composing Collage #2. She luxuriated in multiple textures, random composition, personal meaning-making with precious artifacts and ruins from her life, such as a button from her grandmother's coat, curtain fabrics, sheer, diffusing fabric screens, raindrop-shaped beads to represent the rain that makes her beautiful gardens grow, pictures of contemporary and

ancient architectural ruins, each meaningful to her memory. Everything was contextualized in family love and zest for her life.

Her detailed collage was intentional in portraying a persona attitude towards the world. Fabric layers and tie-back curtains symbolized control and management of exposure. Pearls of wisdom symbolized her inner knowing. She included a quotation that guided her at difficult junctures: **"Whatever anybody says or does, assume positive intent. You will be amazed at how your whole approach to a person or a problem will become different."**

A picture of European ruins unfolded a funny narrative of a family vacation that left an indelible impression on young Emily. She looks at ruins differently now, recognizing loss and decay. "It's too bad that this building fell apart and nobody kept it as an active piece of community. But at the same time there is something so basic to see just the remnant of a building and that it was something or could be something again." Emily's collage communicates rhythms of life - loss, birth, rebirth, decay, renewal. Emily's collage pulses with zest for life - visual communication and expression of her feeling values.



Emily's bubbly, ebullient personality belied her emotional vulnerability. Of Collage #1, *Impediment/Inner Critic*, Emily said, "I think of my inner critic as a voice I stand in front of, stripped of all my securities." A nude statue of a woman stands with her back to the inner critic, which is depicted as a pop-out. Closed or open, it has the feature of a beak-like, mechanistic, monster mouth, with pecking, devouring capacity. A crumple of clear plastic creates a brittle sound effect - the feeling Emily's inner criticism gives her. "I needed to show the overwhelming feeling when the inner critic makes you crumple in on yourself, and your body and mind feel rumpled, scrunched up and crinkled." The text **25 Reasons** exaggerated the critic's criticisms to publishable-worthy proportions.

Emily wanted to also show that the inner critic can be quieted. She added ribbon "so the mouth could be tied closed." When the beak is open, it also suggests the feature of an eye – an ambiguous quality of seeing and observing. Paper strips with affirming quotations frame the eye and further influences this perspective. Emily glued pearls of wisdom below her critic, because, she admitted, "If I'm honest sometimes my inner critic is right and offers up some important evaluations."





Emily's final project, *Free Expression*, invoked a Joseph Cornell box construction (2003) in which treasured oceanic artifacts are suspended with thin plastic string within a memory box creating an underwater- dreamscape of textures, shells and vegetation - an illusion suggesting timelessness and ephemerality drawn from Emily's long history by the eastern seaboard. The re-texturized background of sandpaper and gently swinging shells leaves viewers to ponder about perspective - are we looking down into the water or are we, like the objects, suspended, on the same plane? Are we, too, in the water?

Emily entered class in an impoverished state in cognitive and emotional frames of reference. Her disorientation in the classroom was less related to encountering unfamiliarity through artful endeavors, but more so in the inability to re-image and recoup her creative self in relation to the formulaic mechanisms of her marketing job. Stepping into a generative, supportive and artful environment swiftly re-invigorated her innate imaginative skills while also gradually changing core perceptions of artfulness in the whole of life.

Through each assignment, Emily discovered increasingly artful and aesthetic appreciation in her daily environment. Each walk with her dog, for example, holds new discovery in her neighborhood surroundings. She now sees art at the airport, where her job often takes her: "It dwells within the way the flights land and take off with perfect timing, the way the bags come down the baggage claim carousel. I cannot say that I spend as much time basking in the artist form at the airport as I do at the beach, but I do appreciate how things work together and there is magnificence in that timing." Emily has learned to find and value artistic nuances in her highly-charged business environment while simultaneously restoring herself with a changed perspective through her feeling value that there can be qualitative evaluation and valuation in her business world. "It is a very calming way to add a breather to my hectic day. There are artful nuances in everyday life. When I feel things spinning out of control I take a moment and look for a touch of art. What did my team accomplish? Did we look at the details we needed to see in our tasks? Or did our undertaking run amuck and the details become lost to us? Do we have the tools we need? Were we able to achieve the desired outcome? Are we able to stand midway though our journey and enjoy our work? These questions are symbolic of this class to me." Emily has learned to imagine and cognitively re-frame her job functions into a qualitative valuation of professional functioning, even at a job that she feels is formulaic, driven by statistics and artless most of the time. She implants her feeling values through a newly acquired appreciation of collage as an artful way of professional functioning: "While my job is not art in the literal sense of the word, it is still an art form that my team has skillfully mastered. Each team member adds their own stamp to the project and much like collage, it texturizes the final project."

Through an affective way of knowing, Emily explored her depleted interior landscape through emotional expression and statement of feeling values which inform and direct her judgments about her life. From the beginning of class, Emily's strong ability to think abstractly, create symbolically, and construct artwork that communicates thick, dense narratives supported her efforts at creative exploration and emotional renewal. Upon finishing each project, Emily

felt like she had recovered, rediscovered some lost part of her Self. She kept saying "This course is art therapy!" In her final paper, Emily described her experience: "This class took me out of a depleted place and brought me back to my inspired roots. Art is not just the good stuff you find in the museum, which can feel out of reach, but it is in part the way the dance of life unfolds around us. I now see my job as a daily dance I choreograph with all the vendors, staff members and our client."

Sensory Way of Knowing

“Intense aesthetic perception derives from an awareness of the sensations of living, and an appreciation of being alive. The arts engage the senses in an exploration of possibilities. The arts allow us to represent our truth, our assumptions and our imagination through dance, music, painting and drama. The arts make connections between experience and vision. They promote discovery, nurture trust, and generate transformation. The arts are about life. Let’s teach an appreciation of life in our schools.”

Diaz, *Leading with the Arts* (1998)

In this analysis, an aesthetic experience is recognized as a sensory way of knowing - involving direct interaction, emotional and sensuous encounters - between artwork, the artist and the viewer. In comparing, contrasting, liking, disliking, making judgments, interacting with, and interpreting from experience, we sensorially entertain new possibilities for knowing the world through active engagement with art. In keeping with Greene (in Diaz & McKenna, 2004), an aesthetic way of knowing is a perceptual journey in the “pursuit of more and more unexplored perspectives and attentiveness to all sorts of forms in their concreteness and particularity ” (p. 25).

An aesthetic way of knowing is fundamental to critical thinking, occupying both a transcendent and everyday function in life (Diaz, 2004). An aesthetic way of knowing “involves a sensuous awareness of the physical context and an intrinsic delight with specific actions, along with a desire for joyful meaning, and a need to feel gratitude for the whole process” (Diaz, 2004, p.85) followed by some form of critical discrimination (Dewey, 1934; MacIntyre Latta, 2001; Diaz, 2004), resulting in heightened appreciation. In this respect, the aesthetic experience is akin to the experience of embodiment (Snowber in Diaz & McKenna, 2004) contrasted with passive, awe-struck approaches and mastery of traditional art appreciation, common to traditional study or museum appreciation (Greene, 2004).

In this analysis, from the approach of this artist-teacher research, value is less on the actual art product and more on the experience of making the art (McIntyre-Latta, 2001; Diaz, 2004).

From a Jungian perspective, the aesthetic can bridge all four functions of ego-consciousness (thinking, feeling, sensation and intuition) but an aesthetic way of knowing specifically engages the individual, sensation function regardless of how well or underdeveloped a function may be. While the thinking and feeling functions are ways in which humans organize their interior and exterior worlds, sensation and intuition are specifically how humans perceive or "take in" their interior or external worlds.

Sensory Analysis 1: Donna

Transformed Through a Color. Donna

Donna's "nest is empty" and she is in mid-life with a successful career as a dental hygienist. The second half of her life looms ahead of her while she has tentatively stepped out to start an undergraduate degree. She swings emotionally between fear, drive, lethargy, aspiration, boredom, satisfaction, and restlessness. She gave everything she could to mothering and her marriage. "Now what?" she muses. Donna perseverated over her deep desires, worrying and gnawing at her longings while simultaneously producing objections and impediments to every offered encouragement.



To the pre-class assignment, "*Bring an object to introduce yourself*", Donna's ethnographic artifacts were an assemblage of her desire to develop her art skills, to loosen up her imagination and creativity, and to express her confusing fear and apathy towards her desire. She shared her first fine-arts landscape oil painting and '*Day of the Dead*' relics which represented her desire for funk in her art: "I am so passionate about this painting because it was my first one and it was actually in an art show. But I would love to be able to loosen up. I would love to be able to do like crazy funky art." Her third object was the book, *Art and Fear* by Orland and Bayles (1993), which she claims to have read on every vacation for the last five years, while

simultaneously reading *Art of Happiness* by the Dalai Lama (2009), a spiritual mentor.

Donna has been yearning for a long time. The class affirmed her talents while she simultaneously, seemingly habitually, provided impediments to every encouragement. Donna harkens to deep spiritual practice through yoga, but she constantly feels out of balance with her life. She longs for creative expression but cannot get past her malaise. Donna longs for more time and balance in her life. She is artistically paralyzed. "Finding the balance between my art life and my family and work life has always been something of a challenge. I actually do have art in my life. I go to galleries and openings. But I don't make art." Her yoga practice helps her to be more grounded but she wants to be able to paint with grace and easy flow, too. Donna's ethnographic objects and her roaming, fragmented story-telling style took on the effect of a living, in-process visual and narrative assemblage of her life.



For the assignment, Collage #1, to portray her *Inner Impediment/Inner Critic*, Donna first announced, "I hate everything that I do. It is not good enough." Donna chose orange, transparent, tissue paper for her background which she let float over the

edges of the white foundation. She resoundingly stated that she hated the color orange as she loosely attached the orange tissue to the frame, creating a puffy, disheveled, but sumptuous textured surface. She tore and ripped the edges. She liked the experience and the visual edginess of the tears and rips. The color orange spilled over the edges, dominated the senses, and electrified the eye. During her critique, with a combination of lament and self-deprecating humor, she cited numerous unpleasant associations with the color orange, starting with resentment at the childhood autumn and Halloween-themed birthday cakes she had to endure when she really wanted pretty, girly, pastel cakes with summer flowers. But bad, sad things had also happened to her family in October time-frames and autumn became associated with sorrow, sadness, longing. For a long time, Donna never enjoyed or grew orange flowers in her gardens. Her palette was pastel. But she added, as a humorous endnote, that she was trying to 'make peace' with orange through the beauty of the Hari Krishna and the Dalai Lama's orange robes and her many associations with love, beauty and peace. She had been trying.

Donna picked bronzy metallic letters and magnetic words to text her collage with her theme of perfectionism and "all about me-isms". Medusa's snaky hair portrayed her edgy energy, an iconic white picket fence portrayed her long, successful, traditional marriage, and a fruitful assemblage represented her love of mothering and all the goodness in her life. The collage was aesthetically pleasing. Each element was compelling and a visual narrative of its own, bound by the disreputable dominance of the color orange. But her text: "**Me, Myself**", "**The curse of the perfect**" belied her comfort.

During the critique, Donna declared she was a whiner, and that she and her perfectionism were her own impediments. She declared that since she started

this class she decided she wanted to stop whining and take responsibility for it because she is the one who makes the choice to try to be perfect and she realized that she is the only one who can do anything about it. Through this cognitive shift towards self-responsibility, Donna began to activate her imagination. She chose to do this through deep experience and exploration of the phenomena of a single color - the color orange.



Donna continued to collage with the color orange in Collage #2, *Free Exploration*. While continuing to declare her dislike of the color orange, she chose an even more intense, orange- copper, shiny, metallic paper that had texture and wrinkles already layered and structured into it. It was a definitive grounding for her collage - opaque, dense in structure and stability. She affixed and glazed autumn leaves (that she so resented in childhood). She distributed clusters of spiritual representations - the Buddha, three trinity rings. The white picket fence of Collage #1 was replaced with a snake-skin picket fence. With dry, wry humor, Donna affixed the text, **Happy as Clams**, to the now wildish domestic fence with a bit of irony, and then backed off of it, fearing she was misunderstood. But the irony was left hanging along with all the other images that had morphed and

adjusted from Collage #1 to Collage #2. Donna was exploring and expressing deeply held feelings through a wide range of text, texture, and images.



Donna confidently approached the final project of *Free Expression* with techniques of a disciplined and skilled artist. While the gesso dried on a new 26" x 30" canvas, she created a prototype on a smaller sketchpad with oil pastels. She added meditative text to contemplate during painting: **finding the balance/ fulfilling the yearning /satisfying the inner critic.**

Donna had intended to try to paint an abstract painting, but she kept thinking about the color red after seeing the artist Goldsworthy's work with red iron in stone (Rivers and Tides, 2004). Donna shared that she has felt as ambivalent and agitated about the color red as she has felt about the color orange. But now, in addition to orange, she was seeing the color red everywhere - on signs, buildings, clothing, sky, skin. She found red vitalizing and exciting. She kept thinking how she never had red flowers in her garden. Everything was pastel. She dryly added, "No wonder I am yearning." Donna achieved another cognitive enlightenment.

Donna used red as an under-painting instead of her intended black and suddenly she was fascinated with long rivers of red on the white canvas. She thought back again to *Rivers and Tides* and realized this was the beginning of a very special moment. She felt risk at painting on such a large surface and working with an unfamiliar medium - matte gel. But she liked mixing the colors. The large brush felt freeing. The color was bold and so was she. She harkened to Georgia O'Keeffe's bold poppies as she created a larger-than-life exposition of the emergence of red in her palette and aesthetic awareness.

Her inner critic popped in from time to time and when that happened, she stepped back and looked at the painting, but with a different perspective. "This is for me and no one else. Maybe the story I tell today is just for me alone." Her final paper read like a self-statement about art philosophy. "What is art? Art is all around us. It is in nature. It is in the way we present something. It could be in a beautiful dinner, a painting, a garden, dancing, poetry, or music. It can be a way to tell a story to other people or to oneself - the inner self that says to you that you have accomplished something good or beautiful."

Evidence of Donna's transformation through a sensory way of knowing, through aesthetics, is most evident through the change in her color palette. Donna experienced transformation through deep exploration of color. She entered the class preferring a subdued, but uninspired palette. She explored that which agitated her most aesthetically and emotionally. Donna satisfied aesthetic cravings and yearnings through an exploration of bright, vivacious, vivifying colors, bold on the color wheel. She ended the class collaging and painting with bold primary and secondary colors, orange and red. She harkens the phenomena that sometimes that which we buck the most has the most to inform us.

Donna also fulfilled her desire to be able to paint with 'funk', through abstract and free, modern expression. She successfully navigated from representational

fine art to abstract, contemporary art. In so doing, Donna transformed from a "should do", yearning mentality to a free-choice approach to her art appreciation which ironically withdraws the constant striving for balance equation. Through a change in her aesthetic appreciation and artistic abilities, Donna now has many options for expressing the creative impulse in her life. This resulted in a cognitive transformation in her perception of who is an artist and of her own creativity: "No longer will I perceive an artist as I did before. I had the romantic version imbedded in my mind. If I had not taken this class I would not believe that I do live artistically. Now when I look around my house at the vignettes and the colors I choose, I feel artistic. It has been some time since I had made art, and it feels good to fill that yearning. I trust that if I ever feel that lack of confidence again I could meditate on the essence of this class."

Sensory Analysis 2

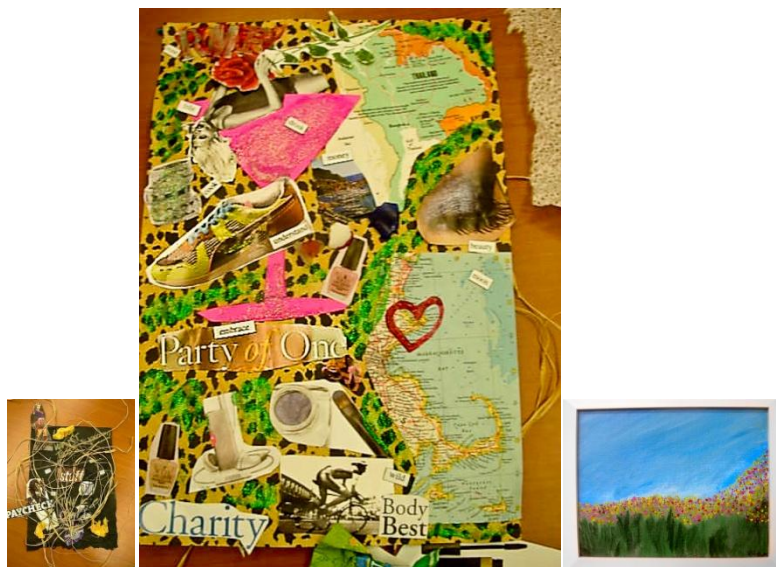
"There is beauty in the ordinary." Rachel.

Rachel is a 32-year-old, insightful, divorced, young woman with a professional history of entrepreneurship and gutsy, innovative problem-solving. She is an adventurer with a self-declared desire for the aesthetically unique and extraordinary in life. She invoked the movie *American Beauty* as a haunting portrayal of her dread and disdain for the "ordinary". She is also an avid creative writer, having written journals throughout her life as a means of self-exploration. An art class in imagination and creativity appealed to her in the early stage of degree completion. But Rachel's life is chaotic and in transition at the moment. "A mess," she rued. Next week she is moving in with her new love and his two children, a long-considered decision that did not include her own beloved, renovated-church-turned-condo - a provisional safety-net/business asset in case the move does not work out (or even if it does, she added).



During the collage assignments, Rachel was noticeably distressed and uncharacteristically quiet. She had a faraway, distracted look in her eye. She informed us that the transition was not going as she had anticipated. For Collage #1, *Portray your Impediment/Inner Critic* she chose to construct a collage on thickly textured, dense, black handmade paper and emphatically stated she wanted nothing to do with pristine, pure, bright, open-ended white. She was so concentrated in her feelings of the moment that she could not think beyond them. She chose to focus on what impeded her today, right now, not life in general. When she presented her collage, she expulsed a triumphant exposition of her “Boyfriend’s witch of an ex-wife who holds me back from everything. She is probably green with envy because I am ‘the woman’. My Dad drives me nuts, calls my Mom crazy. I have left my beloved condo, and I feel like my life is a mess.”

Rachel’s projective blurt began to take on comic performative drama, especially when reviewing her collage process. She had stewed over the collage, gluing clumps of paper with fist thumps, pounding the stapler to attach the random, wildly circling raffia paper. Text and images hung over the torn edges of the black paper. The wilder the collage looked, the more satisfied was Rachel. In the end, the collage looked like Rachel felt, and she was very pleased.



After her expulsive expression, Rachel settled in and quietly collected more materials. At first glance, this collage, too, looked cluttered and chaotic until she deconstructed the meaning of the elements. For these, Rachel was thoughtful and intentional. The background combined multiple textures— a map of the northeastern seaboard with a big red heart marking the site of her life and loved ones. The map dovetailed with animal print ground which she called her life, over which she layered images and text depicting her self-identity through athleticism, her passions and values: **Charity, Body Best**. Green tissue paper between the elements created vibrant textured roads winding throughout. Through the text **Party of One**, Rachel reestablished a sense of individual self in the midst of joining with others in her new relational setting.

In the end Rachel stapled Collage #2 over Collage #1, allowing looping raffia threads to show and hang out over the edges. Collage #1 was present and not to be dismissed, but it was not permanently affixed - staples were a strong binder between elements, but they were provisional, not permanent, and if removed, she noted there was less damage than separating glued paper. Rachel was very pleased with her creations and the symbolism that she used to express herself and her life-changing transition.



It would seem at first viewing that Rachel's transformational learning was emerging along cognitive, symbolic, expressive, emotional, if not even therapeutic lines. Her collages were spontaneous, authentic expressions of internal and relational disorientation and cognitive and emotional reorganization during a big life transition. But Rachel's final project took everyone by surprise and jettisoned her aesthetic sensibilities into focus through her disorienting and chaotic creative process.

Rachel had set up a new white canvas, thinking she should try traditional painting. She sketched out a photograph from Good Harbor Beach. But she lacked painting skills to create a representational painting to her liking. She hated it and her inner critic screamed "Ugly!". She set the photo aside. In changing her mind, which is often a signal of cognitive transformational shift, she chose, instead, to let the brush just flow. She longed to follow her senses and her desires.

"I created a sky with a meadow, and flowers creeping up a hill. I love nature and I wanted to feel the calm and peace of a painting that showed elements in nature. I painted green grass and felt that there needed to be some color on the page. I mixed primary colors together to create purple. I used different brushes to achieve a look of shading or impressionistic dots to resemble flowers. I enjoyed the process of painting from my own mind rather than mimicking a photo. I felt proud as I signed my name."

A white frame brings the viewer's eye to the lightness and brightness of the horizon. Broad, loose brush strokes in the sky create a sense of the wind, a breeze, that follows, pulls, lifts the eye up the hill of flowers. Incrementally-sized brush strokes and varying tones of green create an intimate, then kaleidoscopic perspective, from succulent grass. The painting was full of aesthetic elements that brought pleasure to Rachel's face as each one was recognized and appreciated in the critique.



The process took on more aesthetic appreciation to Rachel when the collages were compared to each other through line and color in that the lines and colors could be viewed as relating to successive art works. The overlying, seemingly chaotic, somewhat spiraling, unruly raffia lines of Collage #1 transformed into sensical pathways and roads in Collage #2 on which Rachel emotionally moved freely and confidently between aspects of what was important to her. The dense, dominant blackness of Collage #1 receded and joined with chaotic yellow to become "natured ground" in Collage #2, marked by overlays of verdant green roads - paths of navigation within Rachel's life.



In the same aesthetic approach, the structural, underlying lines of the Collage #2 (now rotated to its left) replicate the primary lines of Rachel's final painting. The energetic, nature-oriented ground of Collage #2, which Rachel calls her life, is now manifested in thick, green, lush vegetation in the painting. The blue water of Collage #2 transformed to a sky full of energetic possibility. The geographical map of her loved ones and her life transformed into a field of flowers, blooming and extending beyond in the painting. In the painting, the space in-between - the intertext - is highlighted with white, a feeling Rachel now appreciated for openness, expansion, everything, and anything, in contrast to her rejection of the color white in Collage #1. A white frame both bounds and opens the painting while directing the eye to the white intertext, creating a viewing and sensory experience of centeredness and wholeness. The class felt, as viewers, that they were deep into the lush green grass with Rachel, peering out over the abundant flowers and drawn to the white space and swept upward and beyond by the movement depicted in the blue brushstrokes in the sky. The aesthetic, sensorial interaction between the painting and Rachel gave her a feeling of joy and peaceful contemplation.

In a process of portraying extreme situational, relational, and internal disorientation - Rachel's series of art projects became aesthetically ordered and meaningful, as did Rachel. In her final presentation, Rachel shared, however, that her personal critic had shown up again a few days after completion of the

painting and began to see flaws and too much simplicity, naivety, and unattractiveness in her painting and in her creative process. Rachel acknowledged this underlying voice that so quickly screams "Ugly!" had embarrassed her many times during class projects. In response to the concentrated, intense encounter with new aesthetic expressions, Rachel collected experiences that changed her perception of beauty and outfitted her with different cognitive and emotional responses. She restated that while she has sought every attempt to escape the ordinary in life, creating and comparing chaotic, spontaneous and seemingly unskilled, naive but imaginative art, has awakened her mind about what is beautiful in life. Rachel's exploration with aesthetics impacted her cognitive thinking, facilitating change in her thought processes and her ability to appreciate beauty in life from a different perspective:

"I have taken from this class the ability to look at moments from an artful experience. The class awakened me to the ability to see beauty in simple everyday things. The simpleness in ordinary items and occurrences is to be cherished. This class taught me that there is beauty in the ordinary."

In this analysis, a sensory, aesthetic way of knowing is recognized as an interaction between artwork and the viewer in which there is an emotional and sensuous encounter followed by some form of critical discrimination (McIntyre Latta, 2001; Diaz, 2004). In comparing, contrasting, liking, disliking, making judgments, and interpreting from experience, Rachel visually, kinesthetically and cognitively explored new possibilities for knowing her world through active engagement with it. Through the process of multiple sensory exposures and the experience of disorienting emotional reactions to both the creative process and the art product, Rachel developed a idea of a different idea about beauty, one that she was loathe to appreciate. In so doing, she developed changed emotional and cognitive responses to her limiting, self-crippling inner voice. From the approach of artist-teacher research, value is less on the actual art product and

more on the experience of making the art (McIntyre-Latta, 2001; Diaz, 2004), which enlarged Rachel's possibilities of what defined beauty. Process was now also a possibility.

The class listened with rapt attention as Rachel told the story behind this tranquil impressionistic painting, but not before they wondered what had transpired between the extreme materiality of the collage assignments and the simplistic execution of the painting. Rachel told them:

"If there is one thing that has stood out to me in the last six weeks of class, it is that one should take chances and embrace the creation process, not fight with it. Individuals are talented in many different ways. Although I have never felt comfortable with drawing or painting, I am capable, and I should expose myself to try new mediums."

In seeing beauty in simple, ordinary things, and in taking artistic chances, both Rachel's provisional and aesthetic attitudes enlarged, sensorially, emotionally, relationally, and cognitively. In awakening the ability to look at life from an artful experience through an appreciation of simplicity and process, Rachel had, perhaps, achieved the extraordinary - a transcendent experience of transformation.

Spiritual Way of Knowing

*Earthly things must be known to be loved;
Divine things must be loved to be known.
Blaise Pascal*

The topic of spirituality is illusive and all definitions seem to be incomplete, inadequate and contextualized (Tisdell, 2003). Any attempt presumes that the experience of spirituality can be captured in words, its meaning contained, and its essence identified (English, Fenwick, & Parson, 2003). The spiritual, as a way of knowing, may include a wide range of diversity along many parameters, including race, ethnicity, class and gender, as well as spiritual or religious beliefs and behaviors (Smith, 2004). As previously portrayed in the Research Methods chapter regarding the phenomenon of transformation, spirituality, too, is perhaps better analyzed by descriptions of its effects, such as with poetry, art and symbols, rather than by definitions.

In this research, a spiritual way of knowing was approached, greeted and met in the context of the art class with respect (Glazer, 1994), acknowledging our drive to wholeness through interconnectedness and meaning-making of that wholeness (Tisdell, 2003) by manifesting and giving expression to spirituality in non-religious terms. A spiritual way of knowing may include a student's normative religious engagement but particularly acknowledges the student's individual value, experience and expression of the Divine (Jung, 2002) or the transcendent aesthetic (Diaz, 2002), and how that relates to their transformational experience in the art course. When acknowledging spirituality in adult learners, this analysis also acknowledges that spirituality is concerned with a drive to wholeness, however, and wherever, that is expressed (Jung, 1969).

Expressing self through a spiritual way of knowing was the least consciously expressed way of knowing for the subjects in this study, but to those who expressed value for the spiritual, it was very important. Engagement and meaning-making in the spiritual dimension was an important element in the integration and assimilation of the students' transformational process, contributing to their underlying congruity of the self.

Spiritual Analysis 1: Anita

"Nature is God's work of art." Anita

The Goldsworthy movie, *Rivers and Tides* (2004), provided a means for Anita (previously discussed in Cognitive Analysis) to integrate her spiritual way of knowing into her artwork and meaning-making. Anita considers nature "God's work of art" and nature became a means by which Anita could begin to integrate concepts from the class. Anita says she sees beauty in nature, even when it is catastrophic - during times of typhoons, earthquakes, tsunamis', and other life shattering events where lives are claimed, or even cities destroyed. Anita sees awesome beauty, signaling not an expansive appreciation for the aesthetic in beauty and the terrible. Coming from an attitude of harried, rushing, unnoticing, during the course (discussed previously in Cognitive Analysis) Anita found herself slowing down to take walks, to notice nature, especially gardens, to clear her mind and just be a part of it. In allowing herself to awaken to aesthetic appreciation, Anita also tapped into and made room for her spiritual meaning-making.



Through a spiritual way of knowing, Anita learned how to protect, soothe, escape, rest and renew herself through her vessel construction, *Anita's Sanctuary*, her inner and literal sanctuary, a place which includes quietness and privacy to read her Bible. As do many adult learners, Anita resonated with

Goldsworthy's comment that he 'feels drained by people' (2004). In her final paper, Anita compared Goldsworthy's withdrawal to nature to renew and refresh him-self to her own withdrawal to her inner and outer sanctuary - a place of emotional and spiritual revitalization.



For her final project, *Free Expression*, Anita sought to “capture some of nature’s beauty and splendor in a garden.” She created a project to capture some of nature's beauty and splendor in a garden. She stated, "I wanted to show the beauty in nature, as I see it now." She created another miniature world called “Tranquility Garden” — a miniature garden-scape with grass, flowers and pots, garden tools, a worm, and a rock path leading up to a miniature garden fountain. In her final paper, Anita stated: “Tranquility Garden is a place where God’s artwork is on display, a meditative place to go and look at natural beauty.”

In contrast to the privacy of her *Vessel Sanctuary*, Anita opened herself up relationally to others through this art piece. “Tranquility Garden, unlike my private Sanctuary which required an invitation, is a place for one and all to come and gaze upon the beauty in nature.” The pinnacle of her presentation was pushing a button to start the sound of flowing water in the miniature fountain, which elicited gasps of delight from the class and a final burst of applause. Through her presentation, which included this brief, but dramatic, performative portion, Anita demonstrated transformation through the transformational symbol of water, which for many adult learners may be archetypally and symbolically rich with spiritual meanings of renewal, cleansing, refreshment, and activation.

In another sign of transformation through a spiritual way of knowing, for all her reluctance and resistance, Anita is passing on the contagion she experienced in class. In her reflection paper, she said, "My talking about the class has also sparked an interest from those around me. As they listen to my experience about the things I have learned and created for this class, it has inspired them to become more creative." Anita entered the class stating she was uncreative, uninterested, reluctant, and resistant. She left the class, inspired and willing to share with others the value of creativity as spiritual practice, as she had challenged the class to convert her and change her mind about creativity and imagination.

Spiritual Analysis 2: Donna

Creative process as meditation.

Donna (previously discussed in the Sensory analysis), was verbal and open about her desire to integrate creative art processes into her spiritual practices which include the Eastern meditation practice of yoga and following the guidance of her spiritual mentor, the Dalai Lama. Donna seeks balance as a cognitive framework, a feeling value, a relationship construct, and spiritual expression for her life.

Donna feels even more out of balance and disoriented after having sent her daughter to college, started a full-time job, and her own college studies. In addition to reading *Art & Fear* (Bayles and Orland, 1993) on every vacation for the last five years, she simultaneously reads *Art of Happiness* by the Dalai Lama (2009), as she portrayed through the assignment, *Ethnographic Artifacts*.



In response to the *Make a Vessel* assignment, Donna conducted dictionary research to better understand the concept of the word vessel. From various nuances and interpretations, she liked the definition that a vessel was to hold something, 'something into whom or what some quality (such as grace) is infused'. From that cognitive orientation, she chose an old wooden box that had

been repurposed many times - into a spice rack, then a shadow box. Now it was to be a vessel "to represent different ideas that form my art and some that inhibit my art." The vessel collage contains an original oil painting from a dying friend and philosophical, wry, modern quips about duty, perfectionism and values: 'I dreamed my whole house was clean' ; 'I'm happy ...yet I am aware of the ironic ramifications of my happiness.'; 'Learning is a treasure which accompanies us everywhere.' It included text such as: **ART/Balance/Family/Work. Karma. Art and Soul. Beyond.** The assemblage was aesthetically appealing and intimated longing infused with spirituality and modern wryness.



In the collage assignments, #1 *Impediment/Inner Critic* and #2 *Free Exploration*, Donna tapped into her meditative practices and spiritual way of knowing by choosing to explore imagination and creativity through deep experience and exploration of the phenomena of a single color -the color orange. She chose to experience its sensory, emotional, cognitive impact on her through its visual and

emotional agitation, link to unpleasant and unresolved memories, and underlying negative cognitive thoughts and ideas that had formed over the years (as depicted in Sensory Analysis).



In the final assignment, *Free Expression*, Donna continued with a single focus, meditative approach, this time through exploring aesthetics of the color red. On her prototype, she scripted meditative text to contemplate while painting: **finding the balance/ fulfilling the yearning /satisfying the inner critic.**

Evidence of transformation through a spiritual way of knowing is seen in Donna's transformation to a changed identity. In her final paper, Donna described changing from dis-identifying herself as an artist to being able to think of herself an artist with visual art skills and to recognize the breath of artistic expression she creates in life: "No longer will I perceive an artist as I did before. I had a romantic, unattainable version imbedded in my mind. If I had not taken this class I would not believe that I do live artistically. Now when I look around my house at the vignettes and the colors I choose, I feel artistic".

Donna also enacted agency to her change and activated her emotional agency. She wrote: "It has been some time since I had made art, and it feels good to fill that yearning. I trust that if I ever feel that lack of confidence again I could meditate on the essence of this class."

Donna created a new aesthetic expression and integration of her spiritual life into her creative life. Through choosing to explore (meditate on) what was most aesthetically disturbing to her, Donna uncovered a means of transformational learning, exemplifying, perhaps, that which we buck the most has the most to inform us. Donna successful moved from long-term stasis to an activated, aesthetic way of knowing integrated with her spiritual values.

Spiritual Analysis 3: Leah

Living forward with hope.

In presenting her ethnographic artifact in response to the first assignment, *Bring an Object to Introduce Yourself*, Leah intonated a somber, serious tone, without telling facts. She removed a necklace with talismans - a tiny silver charm of St. Jude and a gold sand dollar and stated:.

"I wear this necklace all the time. I have this ongoing quest in my life to find happiness, to keep moving forward. St. Jude is the patron saint for lost causes or for the hopeless. But something about being hopeless is usually when you are hopeless, that is when you truly find hope, and realize that you have faith, and you can move forward, and move on. You have to reach a deep, dark place to go forward. That is something that I am passionate about. It has true meaning for me. I also have a charm from the beach (a sand dollar). The beach is a place where I am truly happy."

Leah described numerous quests to find real sand dollars, quests that were imbued with deep meaning, as in a sacred act. She added that her life quest is "to seek happiness as a spiritual practice".



Through the *Make a Vessel* assignment, Leah took the risk of sharing her history of heroin addiction (discussed in Cognitive Analysis) and simultaneously created a visual representation of a recovery process that was deeply embedded within spiritual beliefs and practices.

"My three vessels represent my past, my present and my future. I have also called them 'Fear for the past', 'Reality for the present' and 'Goals for the future'." Leah's three vessels contained symbolic representations of time - her past, present and future. She invoked the Trinity because "God is a figure in my life." Each vessel was filled with meaningful artifacts- an empty pill bottle, money, photographs, journal entries, jewelry, a crucifix, a symbolic black rock, and additional talismans. As she made her presentation, she spoke of developing and evolving philosophies and spiritual rituals that strengthened her capacity to deal with daily life and to catch up on her disrupted and uneven emotional, social, relational and spiritual growth. Leah stated her need for faith practices: "I could not do any of this without faith and will to survive. I used to only pray in extreme circumstances. Now prayer and spirituality are a part of everyday life. Faith, not just in God, but in myself, my family, and in people in general. Without faith and hope, the world would be a miserable place."

Leah used the class itself to practice and exercise her principles of love, honesty, unselfishness, and purity of motive, principles that have shaped her life since starting a sober life. She actively extended friendship, interest and caring towards the wide range of stories and challenges that emerged around hers.



She resonated with Goldsworthy's statement: "The real work is in the change."
 She transferred one black stone from her vessel project inside the blue birdhouse to represent her past. "The interior is painted pink because despite the bland exterior, there was something heating up inside."

Leah recalled her numerous passive attempts at 'cleaning up' and during this class, she declared, "Change is definitely brewing. One week from tonight I'll have been getting it right for two years and ten months." The class blew out in cheering and clapping. Time was being measured in the slow, laborious calculation of days, weeks, months, and years.

Building the second bird house was a completely different experience. The second one (open for lightness, painted with riotous colors, including a yellow roof) shows "how I now approach creative endeavors with, to quote Diaz, 'an awareness of the sensations of living, and an appreciation of being alive.' " She gave herself permission to "step outside the box and just trust the process." She let ideas flow over her and although everything had meaning, she took Goldsworthy's statement to heart - that "total control can be the death of a work" - and just had fun with it. In addition to her own symbols and meaningful representations, she incorporated features of her classmate's symbols - shells, the sea, fences, even a color. "I have never thought about the color orange

before, but since it's been brought to my attention, I've been noticing it everywhere and I find I'm really starting to like it."

In a final gesture of appreciation to her classmates, Leah stated the stacked hearts on the roof top is recognition of the layers of love, support and acceptance she felt "being piled on me in the last few weeks. It has not gone unnoticed and will never be forgotten." As a final statement, she read: "I don't want to say that I necessarily like the way my 'creative' birdhouse looks, but I do love it in its own way. I put a lot of effort into it, and to me, it looks like something someone who is on their way to becoming less inhibited would create. It does look a bit childish, but I'm not the most mature person in the world so that's okay." In the last minute Leah edited her statement. "No, I do love how it looks. It may not be perfect or the way I had pictured it when I started, but the process was amazing, which is pretty much the definition of my life story."

Throughout Leah's intense encounter with imagination and creative process in this class, a feeling value for a spiritual way of knowing undergirded and guided her every point of development and transformation. The process of change and "growing up" will continue to be an on-going task for Leah. Not every movement, shift or expansion is equally remarkable or perhaps, even transformational, but each one contributes to her astounding task of filling in growth, development and maturity along many areas of the development spectrum (Erickson, 1959). Grounding herself in a faith practice that is supported by family tradition and recovery practices integrates the entirety of her life, providing Leah with yet another frame for transformational experiences, such as she experienced in this class. When many factors coalesce simultaneously and align with her spiritual and recovery values, Leah's recovery will have all that many more ways to form her life into emotional health and maturity.

Relational Way of Knowing

*"I am holding the tension of the opposites for them and for myself
while the shimmer vibrates through me."*

Enid Larsen, 2010

*"The meeting of two personalities is like the contact of two chemical substances:
if there is any reaction, both are transformed."*

C.G. Jung, 1969

A relational way of knowing broadly refers to relationships experienced between and within, internal and external, intrapersonal and interpersonal. In this analysis, a relational way of knowing assumes factors of energetic, dynamic exchange which may be experienced between students, between the students and teacher, or within the student's experience of their own Self.

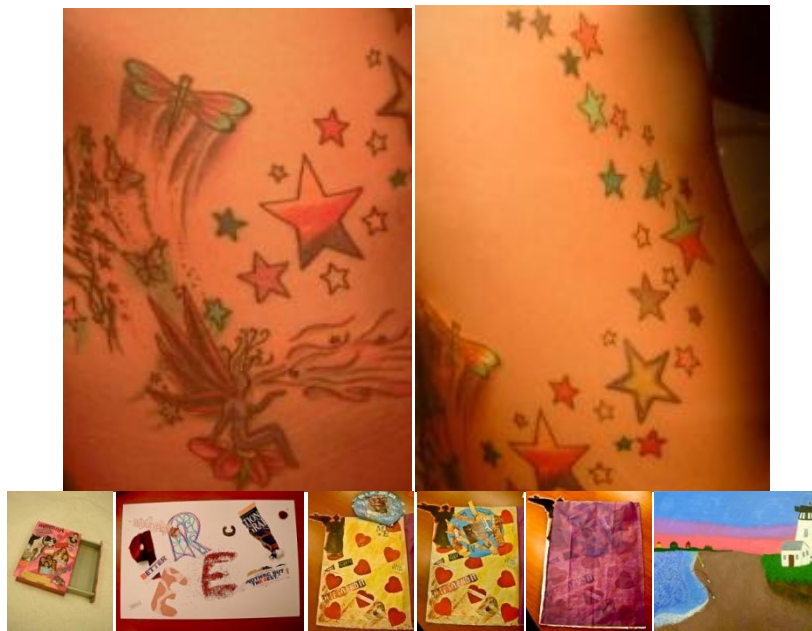
Relational transformation is analyzed through experiences of bonding as a group, development of trust between students and of the instructor, and development and expression of empathy. In alignment with a depth perspective, awareness of the world (through sensation or intuition) or organization of the world (through thinking or feeling) is not enough to sustain humanity (Jung, 1969). The moral task is to apply what is learned in the realm of meaningful relationship to self, others and the world at large.

Relational Analysis 1: Amber

*"My grandmother, the lighthouse, is my guiding light to let me remember
she will always be with me, guiding me through life."*

Amber

Amber is a modern solider - a beautiful, fine-boned, young, single mother, with a tough-as-nails persona who traveled for some distance in rush-hour traffic to attend the course. She stated she wanted to venture into something new by challenging her creativity. Amber is determined to complete her education to improve her and her 3 year-old daughter's life. She wanted to experience something different than her business program of study and her job. From the first assignment to the last, Amber situated her creative expression through value for relationships - both external and internal.



In response to the pre-assignment, *Bring an object to introduce yourself*, Amber held up an ethnographic artifact of two 8'x10' photographs of tattoos, and said *"My object is rather family oriented."* Stars covered the pages in graceful, artistic flows and arcs. There were clusters of dragonflies and fairies. The women burst into confused and startled 'ooh's and exclamations'. Someone asked, "Are they YOURS?" Yes, they were, which released gasps and laughter, and Amber was

pummeled with even more curious "when, how, why and where" questions. Finally, she just stood up and provided a discreet, quick, performative, if not exhibitionist, display of her back to her hip - graceful, feminine arcing of delicate stars, fairies, dragonflies, butterflies, flowers, hearts of many beautiful colors and sizes. Now the women shrieked with laughter, delight and shock. One mother instantly relived the horror of discovering her own daughter's tattoo and feeling apoplectic for three days. Now here was a whole relationship cosmology tattooed over a young woman's body, each design, color and pattern representing someone in her life. Amber declared, "My daughter, friends, family, my military mentor are the most important things in my life." She attributed a name to each star and image. She added that she had designed a dragonfly to tattoo-out her ex-husband's name.

Amber feels passionate about her tattoos. "Mine have like meaning to me. It is something that I am passionate about. Something that is important, that I feel good enough about having on my body for the rest of my life." Amber acknowledges she has a creative side, "but sometimes it hits a wall. I don't know why."



Amber quickly associated the assignment, "*Create a Vessel*" to maternal and relationship containment. Building off her love for books and reading, she embellished a wooden bookform crafted with a drawer. It was painted hot pink (a color she defiantly associated with being female and feminine) and neatly collaged/decopaged on all sides. One side portrayed her daughter, immediate family and pets. Other sides portrayed her dog tags, family life, work, and friends. Interspersed were symbols and words of value, pleasure and memory - the American flag, butterflies, fairies, a ferris wheel. While sharing her vessel, Amber told tumultuous stories of family life and personal relationships, military tensions, but insisted on the centrality and role of family value in her life. She defended her crisp, edgy relational style: "Really, I am pure. I tell you like it is. Unfortunately, I lack tact while I am at it. My first impression is never good. All my best friends hated me at first."

With Amber's book vessel, it was hard to discern what was the top, bottom, back, or front of the book. It required handling, rotating, exploration, and appreciation for a different experience of a book and an object of containment. Unintentionally, Amber managed to deconstruct the assumption of what a book (or a relational vessel) should be, and by extension, how she should be relationally interpreted. While this was not her intention, she was very pleased at that outcome and observation. It further communicated her non-conventional personality and extraverted attitude towards life. She liked that the class needed to get really engaged with her "to get her."

In her response paper, Amber stated that the concept of collage clicked in during the vessel assignment: "In making my book vessel, I realized that I am a collage. There are so many layers and angles to me - pain, happiness, my daughter, my family, my education, my career. But my core is who I am and will never change. Everything else in my life is just collage building and adding to who I already am." Inside the book, she painted a silver lining. "I

Amber, however, quietly began to work on Collage #1, *Impediment/Inner C* responding to my interest and valuation of aesthetic qualities while simultaneously disclaiming her creativity and aesthetic capability. Tyrannical perfectionism reared its head at her studio station. **For my lifestyle, nothing but best/ beauty police/ better/ repulsive** text were scattered between widely spaced unrelated letters and graphics. She stated that she "hates when things aren't p

in my art, my life, my work. But as I am getting older I am realizing not everything in life can be perfect." So she deliberately depicted a backwards letter amongst the graphic letters. She also intentionally did not finish the collage. Then she noted with a bit of irony, "Of course, from that (perspective), now it is perfect because imperfection was the effect I was going for."

Amber leveraged fast conceptual skills to externalize the relational dilemma she was experiencing. Amber showed a glimmer of cognitive transformation - a shift of perspective - when she acknowledged that as she is getting older, she is realizing the futility of personal and familial perfection and idealism. She lassoed the tyrannical, pervasive underlying cognitive thought idea of perfection that was so internalized, it crippled her ability to reframe her situation and to problem-solve. Cognitive changes were occurring. However, aesthetically, the bare white spaces still bothered her and she wanted to communicate something different.



Amber was still agitated with her family disturbance during Collage #2 , *Free Exploration*, but she was much more focused and increasingly experimental.

While cutting, gluing, and layering the collage, she described how she was always the "family fixer" but this problem was beyond her abilities. She transfixed her hope and longing onto the collage. She chose bright yellow as her background and texturized it with glaze before filling it with red hearts. With pride she stated that the text: "In it to end it" spoke both to her military commitment and personal fortitude. She added compelling topside and underside features to a big blue circle that imaged more complexities. In another signal of softening affect and shifting perspective, she humorously, ironically, portrayed the blue circle as a "once-in-a-blue-moon" expression of hope and acquiescence to reality. She affixed a bright pink sheer tissue overlay "because pink makes me feel good" and "it softens everything, even the army." An angel "lurks" in the corner, its wing sticking out from her 'good-feeling' overlay.

Amber was experiencing acute relationship distress that seemed to alleviate through her narrative style of constructing an oversized book-like collage and sharing her personal meaning with the class. The completed assemblage was another inventive, interactive book assemblage, full of complexities, hope and optimism. In her reflection paper, Amber acknowledged that she had been overwhelmed by her family and her personal inner feelings. She had kept her head as high as she could, at home and in class: "By the end of class, I realized, as uncreative as I felt, I still made a creative piece out of my sadness and frustrations."





For her final project, "*Free Expression*", Amber chose to paint, an art form she had never attempted. She rendered a euphoric, idyllic, calming, peaceful scene experienced earlier that week with a friend - fishing on Plum Island at sunset. The painting is aesthetically appealing, invoking two-dimensional folk art. The layers of the sky are brilliant with Amber's aesthetic signature - defiant, hot, feminine pink cutting a swath across the horizon. Green sea grass is thick and heavy with lushness. However, again, in constructive learning environments, it is crucial to ask for meaning from the student. Amber's story of relational transformation occurred unexpectedly through the image and symbolism of the lighthouse, remembered through a scrabbly line of relationship associations and memories (a narrative of associations that replicated the unconventional back and forth, upside down, and forward reading of her book vessel).

That week, while painting, it unexpectedly dawned on Amber that the soap opera, *Guiding Light*, had come to an end - a modern tale that telegraphed into homes for decades. She had watched the *Guiding Light* with her beloved Grandma till her death, which was when Amber was twelve. Amber described the loss of that maternal relationship as profoundly sad. Her early teenage grief left her bereft, emotionally dulled, and increasingly lost in life. Upon painting the Plum Island scene, the associative and projective memory of her Grandmother

with the lighthouse broke back into her awareness with shocking but infusive comfort and remembrance of the childhood guidance her Grandmother provided. "The lighthouse, my grandmother, is my guiding light to let me remember she will always be with me guiding me through life."

Amber symbolically brought forth one of the deepest archetypal connections humans can experience - the internalization of a maternal figure (her grandmother) who had played a significant role in her development years and who was a ready (but out-of-conscious-awareness) source of comfort, solace, and healing relational bonds. Through the stimulus of the assignment, remembrance, and symbolic recreation, Amber adjusted some of her familial and relational assumptions. The creative art process allowed her to adjust her own unrealistic and over-responsible idea of being the 'family fixer'. She settled into acceptance of her limitations and her relational realities with optimistic philosophic and collagic attitudes that things "always work out the way they are supposed to - maybe not today, or tomorrow, or even in the near future, but they will."

Amber was deeply satisfied with her venture into an art class. During her presentation and critique, Amber expressed herself with quiet, simple joy. She said she would love to "take the class over and over. It helped me to let my emotions out through art. It is something I have never done in the past. I may not know much about art shows and the different artists of the world. Let's remember my major isn't art! I learned to challenge my creativity and venture into something new."

Relational Analysis 2: The Students and Instructor

"Let the object speak for you, with you, about you." Enid Larsen (2010)

Ethnographic Artifacts

The first assignment, *Bring an Object to Introduce Yourself* (ethnographic artifact), was an invitation for the women to introduce themselves to each other through personal objects of importance. Ethnographic artifacts, the introductory objects of affection and value, created a non-traditional, imagistic and accelerated way of saying "Hello, my name is ____". The artifacts simultaneously inducted them to the concept of world-making and symbolism by bridging from their everyday world of meaning-making to the classroom. They engaged immediately through mutual curiosity at the idiosyncratic nature of each other's objects, which, clustered together, might look like a shelf on a thrift or consignment shop: a Mickey Mouse watch purchased at the last family vacation before encountering an "empty nest"; a mother's gold necklace acquired after her death; a necklace commemorating a transitional, 50th birthday with friends; a jar of memorable rocks collected by a two year-old son; a decorative gingerbread house representing an annual family tradition; a kitschy frog vase of velvet (given in a private exchange between a student's parents when she was born) only recently given to her by her mother; a photograph of a woman's tattoos, each representing a loved one; a two-inch, open-bottomed, woven basket emblematic of a professional crafter's skill, perfectionism, and unusual artistic vision; a disparate assemblage of art, artifacts and a representational book to portray a difficult journey into artistic expression and creativity; a necklace with St. Jude and a sand dollar - talismans of ritual, hope and healing.



Images 22

Student Ethnographic Artifacts

In an accelerated classroom, adequate introduction of each student may impinge on precious class time, but it is nevertheless essential to invite the essence of each student into the learning circle. The ideosyncratic oddities and deeply personal meaning of the ethnographic artifacts provided each woman with means to cross over from her individual world of meaning-making into an adult learning art class of strangers where expression of self is valued through symbolizing and making relational connections. The ethnographic artifacts and their accompanying oral text elicited questioning from multiple perspectives and pronounced value to the uniqueness and eccentricities of each individual self.

The artifacts incited curiosity about each other. They provided a relational challenge to accept ideas and experiences alien to one's own. The sharing by the students established early relational connection between the students.

The sharing of precious objects readily introduced the students to each other through sharing an object of utmost meaning, while shortening the route to recognizing and appreciating symbolism. A precious artifact worked faster than words. Beneficial or not, it was not until the third week that they realized they did not remember each other's names, but they were intimately familiar with each other's process.

Group Mural



Image 23 Group Mural. Actual size 3' x 8'.

The assignment, *Group Mural*, gave the women a group bonding experience through play while also transitioning from individual to group expression. The women progressed around the mural with cray-pas, adding to the image before them, until a composite image was created from every woman's participation in every discrete image, after which they created imaginative verbal narrative. The stories ranged from 'neighborhoods that grew and began to inhabit people with lives and stories, to fish avoiding a compelling, wormy, fishhook with knowledge gained from their fish-life-experience, a meditative mandala, a calming palm tree, a flower garden with living creatures, a busy cityscape with a big blue moon, the iconic rainbow, children playing, hands creating a vessel. The stories grew and interrelated and became elaborate, nonsensical and outrageous.

The progressive group creation of the mural stimulated a range of reactions, primarily beginning with reluctance, sensitivity to exposure and sensitivity to upsetting others. For example, Carol said the process of building off each other's previous images bothered her at first. She felt inadequate to the task and wondered what she could possibly add. She worked out her feeling of inferiority with each successive addition until she felt herself getting freer and increasingly expressive. Leah stated that she enjoyed creative anonymity while blending and merging with the group. Donna felt apologetic every time she added features, thinking she was ruining someone's picture, even blurting "I'm sorry" a couple of

times. After a few progressions, she began to grasp the nature of group construction and began to enjoy and relish contributing.

Through play, each participant became increasingly desensitized to their particular inhibition or resistance and concluded with enthusiastic and supportive participation. The mural, by design and definition, created a composite/collective experience, fortifying the relational experience of the women with each other.

The entirety of the class was unfamiliar and disorienting to the majority of the class, requiring trust in the instructor to skillfully and safely navigate the students through the complexities of the work. This trust was in place for some of the students and otherwise acquired in the delivery of the course. The course also required willingness for the students to trust each other. The *Vessel* assignment provided a venue for building interpersonal trust while simultaneously creating an a place for intrapersonal containment, exploration, and potential transformation.

Vessels

"But, Enid! You gave us permission!" The Students



Images 26. Vessel, continued: *A container, a holding space, a place of safety, a place to hold one's passion, an internal environment, an idea, a site of incubation, a place of possibility, a place of change, a symbol of the Self.*

The students were given wide latitude to interpret the concept of a vessel as an aspect of their living inquiry. Early in my doctoral studies, I created a simple, white papier mache vessel (which might be as the blank white page for a writer, a blank white canvas for a painter, a chunk of clay for a sculptor) which became emblematic of my transforming process in education. Its simple whiteness, transformed through natural lighting and photography, took on the feel of a "hot pot" aglow with my passion (as portrayed in Chapter III - Visual Autoethnography). While I created a metaphoric vessel for my alchemical process of change and growth, I also began to extricate elements of transformation through recognition of the chaotic "edges" of learning (Berger, 2004) while exploring the torn, ripped white edges. I created multiple forms of vessels from multiple materials, each one variously expressing aspects of holding, incubating, protecting, and nurturing my process. The vessels were joyful, contemplative, sometimes excruciating points of holding, changing and integration. Through the concept of a vessel, I began to formulate an aesthetic for expressing the inexplicable and mostly invisible process of transformation.

In that spirit of alchemical transformation, I invited the students to create their own metaphoric idea of a vessel. Together we discussed possible interpretations, but all the while stressing the point that they were to imagine for themselves a

personal interpretation of a place/idea/concept/time of holding and place of change. The oddity and enormity of the concept initially flummoxed them but their individual interpretations became initial ideas and representations of personal containment and holding for the remainder of the course.



Images 25 Student Vessels

As the students metabolized the metaphor of vessel into a form of personal representation, they grasped the concept that as a class, as a learning community, we were simultaneously creating a vessel for the whole of our intense, short-term learning time together - a place to respectfully tend each other's imaginations, experimentation, and tentative expressions. Rotate the eggs, stir the pot, fan, fuel or tamp the fire, each as needed. As educators, we need to be always mindful of creating spaces of activation, respect and safety for students. How much better that the women could participate in that creation through a deep understanding of their own and each other's interpretation of a safe, generative site for creative exploration and growth. Together, we were in constant flux and evolution within the learning vessel.

Early in the course, the students discovered and identified their own ability to create and respect emotional safety and boundaries, have a place to explore their passions, instill the concept of nesting and incubation, or create a place for rest and rejuvenation. In a moment when I expressed joy and amazement at the transparency, authenticity and swift depth of their portrayals, their collective

response was, "But you gave us permission, Enid!" Their comment jolted me like a shock. Yes, indeed, I did. I underestimated the power of permission to facilitate change. If permission facilitates change, perhaps holding back, fear and complacency in educators impedes transformation. The contrast of sharing an individualist ethnographic artifact to group mural-making provided both a model and contrast for our future individual and group work together.

Sharing the *Vessel* assignment became intensely relational for the women. The assignment brought forth increasing stories of deep importance to each woman. (Some elements have been portrayed and discussed in previous sections of analysis). For example,



Carol was surprised and amazed at how seriously the students took the project and what emotions her, and others, vessel evoked. The diversity, but similarities surprised her, too. "Everyone used different approaches, however, when listening to the meaning of the students, the themes that emerged were so similar."



Rachel found each woman interesting and was curious to hear more of their stories. She described the class as "a group of strangers who quickly bonded by reflection on art. Art was our common bond. Art brought us together." She recognized that "Art brought empathy to the room despite different backgrounds, ages, and living situations. She left wanting to know more.



Donna began to take a self-accounting and experience a shift in self-perspective as she took an empathic look at realities of some of her classmates. She observed that "it seems that my block in minimal compared to some of the difficulties in my classmates lives. I should not complain. I think I will start to look at art a little differently from now on."



Deep sharing emboldened and enabled Leah to take the risk of sharing her addiction history through her *Vessel*: "I am just going to get this out of the way. I am an addict. I am in recovery. I have been clean for two years and almost nine months."



Doris, as an older woman who admittedly had lived through many difficult life experiences was "amazed at the courage of some women to share very personal things." She portrayed the vessels as "small microcosms of a larger life, and whether that was their purpose or not, they managed to absorb us into the lives of their creators. We got to know each other a little better without hours of endless questions and answers. We learned more from the vessels than we would have been allowed to see by delving into their minds with mere words.



Anita, who had taken the class by default and immediately wondering how she could get out of it, found herself "becoming intrigued by the stories of the women." She added in her final paper, "It appears that maybe on the very first night, introducing ourselves through items that meant something to us, and being on the floor creating and adding to each other's ideas, may have helped us to bond." Anita resonated with the compassion and empathy between the women. Relationship and sharing of feelings kept Anita in the class.

Through the initial relationally oriented art project, students began to see the difference between individual expression and group expression, between individual/self and composite/group work. They also experienced the potential of multiplying perceptions through collective group sharing. They increasingly interpreted their work with a developing sense of humor, trust, collaboration,

and care. In between bouts of laughter, there was considered reflection and wonderment. While the women perceived unique features in the narratives of each individual student, they also began to see and experience their similarities. When the vessels were paired with the narratives, it's as if we were all propelled into a deeper vessel - one of group-making.

By the end of the second class, the students were starting to challenge each other's self-perception of non-creativity. The vessel projects were executed with great imagination, care and intuitive nuances. A number of students were struck by the fact that most of them had claimed no artistic talent but agreed with Emily's observation that "art lies dormant in all of us until it is presented with the right opportunity."

Chapter Six

Discussion and Implications

Text and Texture: An Arts-based Exploration in Transformational Learning

A theme that consistently threads through literature on transformational learning in education is emphasis on praxis - action and reflection upon practice in order to facilitate change. In alignment with a psychological depth perspective, awareness of the world or organization of the world is not enough to sustain humanity. The moral task is to apply what is learned in the realm of meaningful relationship to self, others and the world at large. This is a foundational construct of the democratic process (Dewey, 1934; Freire, 1970), of individuation (Jung, 1969), of transformational learning (Mezirow, 2002), and arts-based teacher research (MacIntyre Latta, 2001; Diaz, 2002; Springgay et al., 2008).

Following my own deep learning through visual autoethnography in the studio, I longed to increase my ability to integrate my passion values as embodied knowledge into my classrooms. I desired to express Eros values through arts-based teacher methods. Visual autoethnography, which began on the ethnographic ground of play, grew into an unfolding professional curiosity about the power of living inquiry through art. Visual autoethnography became a means through which I could speak symbolically and soulfully. Through its forms I learned to facilitate learning through transformation of perspective and found how that may contribute to individuation (Jung, 1969).

My research question evolved from passionate interest in inquiry and the rendering of Self through collage into adult learning as an artist-teacher

researcher. What emerged was meaningful, transformational and co-transformational within adult education. I asked again: What value did an arts-based exploration of collage and living inquiry bring to the educational journey of the adult learners?

The value of collage to transformational learning lies in many qualities inherent to art images and to the process of creating collage. Braque and Picasso, at the beginning of the 20th century, experimented with collage and assemblage as a means to portray more than one point of view at a time. As Cubists, they broke with traditions of painting which they saw as inadequate to portray contemporary sensibilities and emerging modern consciousness (Ferrier, 1999). Cubists used space to produce many simultaneous points of view in addition to creating a sense and literal representation of texture. The impact of the whole and the spaces in-between fragments engaged viewers in a new and different relationship, with the artist and viewer as co-creators and co-meaning-makers. Collage was a great discovery within cubism that envisioned modern life and altered future expression of self and culture.



Photos 26

Collages. Picasso.



Glass and Bottle of Suze (1912); Guitarra (1913).

Near the turn of the century and into the 21st century, qualitative researchers identified collage and assemblage as a method situated within an experimental moment in research in the human sciences (Ellis & Bochner, 1996; MacIntyre Latta, 2001; Vaughn, 2005; Biddle & Locke, 2007) to evoke new ways of

knowing in postmodern, postcolonial manuscript. By definition, collage implies and requires working with parts and pieces of disparate materials, applying and removing layers, changing forms, creating multiple dimensions, thereby, both implying and creating texture. Collage makes connections in which the art product reflects, reveals and documents the process of its own creation (Diaz, 2002; Vaughn, 2005). Collage is a malleable concept with a core framework and established design elements or rules: overlap, connection, focal points, tonal values, scale, while yet remaining extremely accessible to unskilled engagement. Combining simple elements can result in meaningful imagery. Collagist methods bring elements together while simultaneously recognizing the separateness of parts and pieces - a process I recognized in my experience of visual auto-ethnography and within the individuation process (Jung, 1969).

As I conducted my visual autoethnography in collage and assemblage and mixed media, it increasingly seemed to me that my work as a professor in an accelerated classroom, too, was an experience of collage - that experience being an artful, dynamic, living, experiential construction, deconstruction and interplay with my students and the curriculum. Might the concept of collage translate to arts-based research in the context of living inquiry in an art class? From that point of insight and query, a collagist methodology conceptualized, organized and powered the entire research inquiry - including syllabus construction, class delivery, collection of data, data analysis, and research presentation. The multiple identities inherent to the artist-teacher researcher genre aligned with the concept of collage and bricoleur in that it privileged multiple perspectives within the research process (Vaughn, 2005).

Drawing upon the analogous, connecting function of collage, I envisioned identifying relationships among and between ways of knowing - an

epistemological approach drawn from my visual auto-ethnography.

Transformation in the students was identified within dynamic, interconnecting continuums of cognitive, affective, sensorial, spiritual, and relational ways of knowing - five traditional ways of learning, perceiving, experiencing, and functioning, all drawn from developmental research (Erickson, 1959). These are dynamic, discontinuous processes. These ways of knowing activated, functioned and impacted each other simultaneously, presenting emerging possibilities that were not envisioned when the work began. Adjustment, alterations, shifts between and within ways of knowing occurred simultaneously. Activation of some or all of these areas stirred and challenged latent (or undervalued) aspects of self to participate with favored (or valued) aspects in a dynamic interaction and integration.

Creative processes through art engagement provide broader means by which to access and produce learning and meaning through visual, sensory, kinesthetic, and emotional experiences (Gardner, 1983). Art is a means for accessing and portraying the *prima materia* - the primary material of our lives (Jung, 1969), the invisible qualities of sometimes ethereal, heady and conceptual material (such as transformation, art, passion, research.) Art can bring knowledge through our body, emotions, and felt sensations, emerging as embodied knowledge (Mirochnik, 2002). The arts are an effective agent of change, disrupting and making unfamiliar what we take for granted as natural and normal (Dewey, 1934). The truth of art is that it can disclose the beauty of extraordinary possibilities concealed beneath the cloak of the actual, the ordinary, and the everyday (Dewey, 1934; Booth, 1999).

In working with images, we bypass the cogitating mind, the intellect, essentially moving it aside to dip to a deeper level, into our inner world, where we most

easily encounter imagination. Imagination and experimentation are closely related and each encourages the other. Art objects, through their symbolic power, allowed the students to 'try 'on' or discover different points of view. Drawing from the metaphor of crystallization (Richardson, 2000), the students came into new perspectives from different angles of perception.

As with my visual autoethnography, the gestalt of the collage method was key to understanding the student's meaning-making. The collage process created opportunity to consider new perspectives, to extract words and provide structure for cognition. The various steps the students enacted in collage brought meaning into focus: how they chose images, created a composition, connected elements, and attempted to find meaning in the resulting artwork through sharing and dialoging, with each other and with the images. Creative art processes through collage made the student's experiences and knowledge acquisition tangible, accessible and available for recognition.

In the vernacular, the collage experience may be considered an educational engine with six cylinders - an accelerated experience of perception. Through collage, the students accessed multiple perceptual modalities (visual, aural, sensory, olfactory, taste). They experienced and witnessed multiple ways of knowing (cognitive, affective, sensorial, spiritual, and relational). They collaged increasing layers and aspects of experience. They made choices about what to do with their perceptions, thoughts, emotions, and behavior on a continuing basis, portrayed with paper, fabric, paints, threads, buttons, shells, life ephemera. The students layered, de-layered, painted over, stapled, glued, sewed, ripped, cut, and texturized their art work while communicating, altering, and adjusting their thoughts, ideas and emotions. Springgay (2004) says art

allows us to have the direct experience of being in multiple places at once, feeling multiple emotions, and holding contradictory opinions.⁷

The students' experiences with imagination and creativity supported a different form of literacy, an embodied literacy conveyed through the aesthetics and expressiveness of art (Diaz, 2002; Springgay, et al., 2008). Dewey provided foundational recognition of the expressiveness of art as a language that is comprised of many forms, asserting that "each art medium says something that cannot be uttered as well or as completely in any other tongue" (1934). Maxine Greene (1988) underscores Dewey (1934) and Freire (1970) in her assertion that transformational learning is about reading the world in a type of literacy that includes comprehension, particularly through the arts:

"For those who are authentically concerned about the birth of meaning, about breaking through the surfaces, about teaching others to read their own world, art forms must be conceived as an ever-present possibility. If transformative learning is our concern, the arts ought to be a central part of curriculum." (p.131)

Art and aesthetics can provide a powerful impetus for exploration in the world with adult learners (Dewey, 1934; Greene, 1995; Diaz, 2004). As we see in this research, art acts as a stimulus and portal for deep exploration of self and transformation. The adult learning classroom is ripe for images and symbols by virtue of the volume, breadth and depth of experience that accompanies adult learners. Greene (1934) insists:

"that every teacher (like every student) should have an opportunity to work with at least one medium to mold, to carve, to detail, to embody feelings somehow. No matter what the degree of insufficiency, the very effort to say how it was, how it is, by means of words, to transmute a startling perception into an image, to express a feeling through an arrangement of chords, somehow brings us into the heart of the artistic-aesthetic. We may not succeed. We may not complete what we want to complete. But we know

⁷ While the objective of transformational learning is for beneficial effect, the possibility should also remain open that transformation may not always be positive, and may also have detrimental or deleterious impact to self or others, such as was experience through the events of 911 (Jung, 1969; Greene, 2001; Mezirow, 2002).

in some measure; and we rediscover what it is to move beyond, to question, and to learn (p. 26).

Carbonetti (1998), a practicing, publishing and teaching artist, equally insists that:

"it is vitally important for more people to make more art – not just fine artists making their living at it, but everyone, in whatever way they can. Just as we use writing and reading as tools for our Logical Mind, so our ability to express what we see and feel would must communicate constantly to the other parts of our being, to our great Body Mind and Heart Mind, helping to keep us whole." (p.111)

Through artful encounter with collage and assemblage, the curriculum and studio experience of the class simultaneously engaged the students in self-exploration to thoroughly, deeply, explore broader applications and implications of collage as a way of organizing self and as a way of being in contemporary culture. They acquired a framework from which to perceive and respond to their personal worlds and the world at large.

What did I learn about transformation and co-transformation while working with the adult learners and creative art processes?

Data analysis placed me squarely back into the inherent tensions of portraying the ephemeral and liminal quality of artwork and lifework in the context of transformational learning. This tension within the analysis harkens to Derrida's (1930-2004) re-statement of skepticism that "the arts are impossible; and even if the arts are possible, understanding the arts is impossible; and even if understanding that art is possible, communicating that understanding is impossible." The enduring dilemma of how to understand and communicate what can be known through artistic processes and products of oneself and others is compounded by the difficulty, which I discussed in Chapter II, of defining the phenomenon of transformation. By virtue of the multiplicity of

perspectives honored within artist-teacher research - those of artist, teacher, researcher, and student - methodological tensions were multiplied.

Despite both enduring and multiplying philosophic approaches and attitudes towards arts and transformation, there must be a system of examining the evidence of research that fully discloses the researcher's method for meaning-making. While transformation seems to defy definition, or at the very least, all definitions of it seem to be inadequate, a definition of transformation was needed to provide full disclosure of my assumptions.

An assumption in this research was that transformation is never just one thing nor is it restricted in time. In this research, transformation was defined both as change that occurs through shifts in perspective, such as Mezirow (2000) portrays through a sequence of cognitive responses to disruption and disorientation of assumptions, and secondly, to shifts to a core sense of self, such as Jung (1969) portrays through individuation. Transformation, seen as shifts of perspective, changes of affect and behavior, heightened aesthetic appreciation, and spiritual expression, and their concomitant effects on a core sense of self, were evidenced through artistic, textual and verbal responses. Transformation was characterized by movement of some sort - enlargement, contraction or shrinkage, emergence, disappearance, shifts in different directions, adjustment to ideas and changed feeling states.

The analysis particularly examined the role, impact and value of encountering (as a learner) and facilitating (as a teacher) disruptions and disturbances to perspectives, assumptions and habitual frames of reference as part of transformational experience. The purpose of an analysis of these student's transformations through their artwork and written words was to provide a

glimpse, a view, or a directional, of sorts, of the process of transformation and convincingly show that transformation indeed occurred.

An inherent challenge in the analysis of transformation through creative art processes lay in the paradox of simultaneous seeing and obscuring the dynamic relationships and impact between all the ways of knowing (Eisner, 2002). The students' process of transformation was more collagic, multi-dimensional and holographic in nature than linear or two-dimensional. Separating and lifting up the threads of each way of knowing separated it from its dynamic integration with other ways of knowing. Separations may secure a glimpse of one aspect, one way of knowing, but provide an impartial view of the way it impacts and enacts, or is impacted and enacted upon, by others. In keeping with the collagic nature of the entire research, when the different ways of knowing were discussed in the analysis, one way of knowing was highlighted while also indicating how other ways were dynamically interacting with and influencing the process. This collagist approach to analysis aligned, in the artistic realm, with the function of a bricoleur, someone who assembles/puts together images and accompanying textual data to make something whole that another can see or read - a whole that in some way evoked the students' life world.

Drawing from a rhizomatic conceptualization of arts-based research (Deleuze & Guittari, 1986; Paley, 1995; Irwin, 2000; Springgay, 2000), a collagist approach to the research also privileged all entrances to the students' work without assigning positional value to any particular way of knowing. The students entered and navigated through a variety of portals and pathways within the collage and text assignments. Any point of entry enabled discovery of new connections, new meanings and linkages within the Self without reductive analysis. Each portal opened up new ways to perceive, experiment with, and assimilate their learning

- adding, subtracting, changing - while maintaining the essential core sense of their Self.

These methods of analysis accounted for the students and the artist-teacher researcher in a progressive process of analysis and left open the possibility for both artistic and textual methods of analysis. These approaches are affirmed by Maxine Greene (1988) who encourages the development of awareness and cognition through both reflective and logical thinking while asserting that “the point of cognitive development is to interpret from as many vantage points as possible lived experience, the ways there are of being in the world” (p.120).

Defamiliarization/Chaos/Vessels

Transformations may be arduous and harrowing. They can push us to the edges of our knowing (Berger, 2004). As Diane (Affective Analysis 1) stated in her final paper, she learned that both life and art are sometimes hard, sloppy, messy, and very unpredictable. It is not a matter of whether chaos will be present in transformational learning; it is more a matter of how chaos will be encountered, engendered, contained, and processed to facilitate the goals of the class and the needs of the students. Chaos is inevitable in transformation and it may be one reason why educators avoid transformational practices. Dewey warned us, however, as both learners and educators, of the dangers of becoming complacent with life, of over-comfort in living with “recurrence and complete uniformity” and “the routine and mechanical.” Complacency is an anesthetic in experience that “numbs and prevents us from reaching out, from launching inquiries (Dewey, 1934; Greene, 1988).

Defamiliarization, a necessity in transformational learning, was an artistic and pedagogical technique to inject a dose of generative disorientation into the students' familiar and comfortable frames of reference. Defamiliarization discloses aspects of experience that we do not ordinarily see (Dewey, 1934). Response to the unknown and unfamiliar is essential for mining the potential of defamiliarity. Rejection, avoidance and devaluation are possible responses in the classroom, as well as curiosity and imagination. Defamiliarization, too, may be experienced as disorienting and, therefore, avoided or minimized. Empowering students to welcome and manage the stimulation of unfamiliarity, as opposed to warding off or avoiding challenge, is an essential challenge for transformational educators.

Working with images has the possibility to increase our agency with disorienting dilemma (Mezirow, 2000) in that imagination is a conduit between the known and the unknown. Dewey (1934) and Greene (1995) assert that imagination is the portal for integrating the meaning of past and current experience. The exercise of imagination provides a way to approach what is unfamiliar and a way to navigate through disorienting situations. We may entertain ideas and affect with immediacy and distance simultaneously, extracting and integrating understanding and meaning, when we are ready and able to.

The entire encounter with imagination and creativity through collage was an experience in defamiliarization and disorientation for the students. Drawing from my visual autoethnography and the creation of an alchemical vessel for my passion and learning, through the artwork of constructing their own vessel, the students discovered and identified their own ability to create and respect emotional safety and boundaries, have a place to explore their passions, instill

the concept of nesting and incubation, or create a place for rest and rejuvenation.

As the students metabolized the metaphor of vessel into a form of personal representation, they also grasped the concept that as a class, as a learning community, we were simultaneously creating a vessel for the whole of our intense, short-term learning time together. We created a metaphoric place to respectfully tend each other's imaginations, experimentation, and tentative expressions. We rotated the eggs, stirred the pot, fanned, fueled or tamped the fire, each as needed. Together, we were in constant flux and activation within the learning vessel. As educators, we need to be always mindful of creating spaces of activation, respect and safety for students. How much better that the women could participate in that creation through a deep understanding of their own and each other's interpretation of a safe, generative site for creative exploration and growth.

Internal Impediments to Transformation

A primary assumption in this research was that resistance, reluctance, disorientation, fear, and creative impediments dwell in the world of *prima materia* - the under-valued, under-developed, misunderstood, hidden, shadowed realms of human experience. As I portrayed in the visual auto-ethnography, the *prima materia*, the primary material of our life, is perhaps the most potent stimulation in that it is generated from within. The *prima materia* is found in the shadows, in the unlit, discarded, despised places of a person's life (Jung in Edinger, 1994).

When the students were invited to collage their internal impediment to their creativity and imagination, they entered into unlit, mostly unexplored, even despised places within themselves. It was a time-limited, serious, potentially overwhelming experience. It was an invitation to chaos. It was a pedagogical risk made safer with the internalized and activated concept of a personal and group vessel already in place.

It was valuable to address the students' objections to creativity and learning up front - to invite impedance and resistance and give it creative expression and value so it would not unknowingly undermine the learning process. A negative thought form, an inner critic, a crushing idea, was thriving in every student. In some instances, it was so dominating it threatened to overwhelm and sink mood and spirit. If we do not acknowledge the presence of impediments to creative process, they will make their presence known anyway, typically in disagreeable or distracting ways.

We also have to first recognize that impediments are present before we can develop an individual response to them. Through collaged images and text, the students saw what they think and what they feel. The collage brought the students' negative thoughts to as much consciousness and focused awareness as possible in a short time frame, and made their thoughts available for discussion, consideration, and response. Imagination in images gave way to new considerations. The provocative images and words provided a compass, a directional, a visual text for discovering deeply established negative thought patterns and assumptions while potentially revealing a resource for transformation.

"The journey into the unfamiliar can be scary. Some discoveries may be so strange we want to cover them back up and run. Whether exploring the depth of the human soul or the depth of matter, artists, mystics, and scientists have come face-to-face with chaos and disorder. But the opened mind thrives on difference and remains open to the contradictory."

(Barron, Montuori, & Barron, 1997, p.57).

Collage was an expedient medium for accessing and portraying the student's impediments to transformational experience. The exercise of imagination through collaging allowed them to navigate through what, for most of the students, was a surprising and disorienting experience. Through the collages, the growing edge was its own teacher in that giving attention to what they devalued, discarded and feared provided them with old material in a new form. They were able to entertain their ideas, affect and behavior with immediacy and distance simultaneously, extracting and integrating understanding and meaning, when they were ready and able.

The Art Critique versus Inner Critic

The capacity to explore our own creations and recognize the accomplishments they hold is one of the critical skills of the work of creating art. The art critique, a traditional display and discussion of one's work in art education, provides time for reflection and critical thinking within the learning environment. To do this, students must learn to "set aside prejudice and judgment, perceive with clarity, discover what works and does not work, celebrate the process, and bounce ahead" (Booth, 2001). This is a difficult task, one that must and can be learned. The traditional art critique, however, has a reputation as an encounter with uncertainty, exposure, and potential shame and humiliation (Singerman, 1999), making it fertile ground for activation of learning impediments and inner critics in students.

In this research, the art critique was interpreted as a time of witnessing, verbal sharing, responding, clarification, and affirmation. The art critique was designed to contribute to the whole of the adult student's educational enterprise and life through integration of art sensibilities, art engagement and art aesthetics. After initial trepidation at the risk of exposure, and once the students experienced feedback that respected their strengths and vulnerabilities, the students began to eagerly look forward to the critiques. The students learned that when they engaged in open exploration of their own artwork, they magnified artistic skills, engagement, and pleasure in living, in what Diaz (2004) refers to as intense aesthetic appreciation. When the students participated in open exploration of other's artwork, learning was expanded through multiplication of learning scenarios, problem solution and formation of new ideas. Self-conscious, personal reservations expanded to aesthetic and relational curiosity. The students expressed compassion and tolerance for diversity in artistic expression, life experience and emotional expression. Rachel expressed for all when she observed in her final paper, "Art creates empathy."

Emergence of Text and Texture

Transformational teaching may also be a chaos experience for the teacher. The teacher needs to be willing and able to participate in not knowing while simultaneously holding the space for the students. Throughout the research, I engaged in studio exploration of the students' and my own transformational processes. In the context of artist-teacher research, I maintained focus on core aesthetic elements established through my visual ethnography and my personal lexicon of transformation: ruins, ephemera, parts and pieces, texture, assemblage, dis-assemblage, chaos, the blank white page. Mid-course, I wrote the following:

A Short Story from the Classroom

The students are creating raw, deep, authentic expressions, which is shaking them up a little bit. They have commented that this is not what they expected in higher education. It is not what they expected in an art class, nor coming into a class of strangers. When I too, expressed delight and amazement over their swift trust, deep sharing, and honest art, they shot back, "But you gave us permission, Enid!" They cited images and vessels, artwork, and statements that gave them courage, ideas and permission to "go for it". I felt a small jolt of surprise, fear and responsibility. Yes, I had. Why should I be surprised? Then I felt a little bit of Diane's intone with a teacher's variation: "What have I done? What have I gotten myself into? What have I gotten them into?"

I am in a parallel state of chaos with the students. They unnerved me last week when they said they did not like the textbook. The more vocal students said that "He (the author) is too verbose. He says too many words." "The book is dense." "I can only read a chapter at a setting. He could say the same thing in just one paragraph." I was amused at first because they then talked about their experiences in just as many paragraphs, digressions and extensions before they got to the core of their own nuggets. I responded, "That is all right. That is good. Digest it in small chunks."

But what is happening is that instead of linking what they are reading to what they are doing, they keep digging deeply into what they are doing and what they are sharing, which is rich and wonderful, but it began to throw me. It felt like lost wind in my sails. Something in me feared the class might not have an adequate art foundation. I worried that it would not be a legitimate art class. To what do I reference the concepts? I worried they might not develop capacity to express and integrate concepts without assistance from text and vocabulary. I feared the class would veer irretrievably into a psychology group session, digress to a woman's consciousness raising group or something equally contentious to the Academy. I felt both protective of the Academy and its mission, and conflicted in my belief and trust in my own experience and what I was bringing forth from the students. By the end of class I felt myself getting a bit didactic and preachy. My chin went up, my face tilted a bit to the side. I talked high. Everything felt like it was stretching up - my head, my neck. I was trying too hard. I did not feel natural.

When I came home from class I rustled around, sleepless and restless, my agitated thoughts reviewing the class. No, they were not disregarding the text. They were reading it but they were contemplating, resisting and arguing with it. That is a good sign of student engagement. Then, while brushing my teeth, a pop-up memory jolted me mid-swish. I recalled that Erich Lindeman said: "Experience is the adult learners' living text book "(1926).

I was stunned to a halt. Here it is. I am experiencing the very philosophy that has undergirded adult learning theory for a century. I have a little garden of students who are saying, "We like what we are saying to each other and we are getting more out of what we are saying to each other than what we are learning from the text book." It knocked me off my good senses. Then I started thinking about that. Why should that be? This is not a new concept to me. Experience, living inquiry and constructivism are core philosophies in my interdisciplinary practices. What was happening that I should feel so tentative and insecure when I am deliciously experiencing my deepest held convictions played out in the class and my research?

Now I really could not get to sleep. I puttered around recollecting a memory - a book from my own life - a spontaneous, non-traditional, collaged book I assembled before embarking on doctoral studies. The book assemblage had ended up about 10 feet long of unfolding, re-folding, torn, ripped, layered, hand-stitched, glued, stapled, patched textures of monochromatic white

paper with long, dangling threads and varied bindings. It was a sculptural, textural story of my life. In many ways, it was an early aesthetic expression with ruins, threads and fragments, constructed around the concept of the blank white page.

I felt an urgent need to recreate that book, this time not as personal text, but as text and texture shared with my students. I began collecting monochromatic white papers and textures, using papers from class, from daily life. I continued to work on the collection throughout and after the class as part of the on-going research response and analytic process.

I underestimated my words, my living inquiry, and my own art as valid and valuable contributions to the class and to the Academy. I am not apart from this research endeavor. The course text provided theoretical frameworks. But so did my words and my experiences. Teachers and students alike bring their life, work experiences and elements of knowledge to the classroom which they then piece, patch, glue, sew, staple together. Together, we construct the evolving formation of students' knowledge.

I also saw how I underestimated the power of permission to facilitate change. If permission facilitates change, perhaps holding back, fear and complacency in educators impedes transformation. This is what this research and construction of knowledge is about - it is about the texture and text of students' (our) lives constructed from shared experiences. We are learners together.



Image 27 "Art Text". Collage. Actual size 14" x 20".

Back to Boxes

I created my own Art Text, constructed from a textbook shipping box, deconstructed elements from a previous art piece, *Ruin/Column* (depicted in the Visual Auto-ethnography), handmade paper and 22 carat gold leaf. The text cover is, itself, a vessel, a layered assemblage of these elements that assembled, created numerous tiny places and spaces of containment, places for intimate exploration and storage.

The Art Text opens to a lexicon of transformation within this research,⁸ followed by loose-leaf, unbound pages of paper that evoke the changeable, dynamic, interactive nature of the transformational experiences. Some pages are left-over materials from the students' collage construction; some pages are found papers and materials of everyday life, associated with, or symbolic of the student's experiences and expressions; some pages are collaged sheets, textured to portray an aspect of the participant's experience. Each page is a part and piece of whole textural and textual assemblage, meant to be handled, arranged, rearranged, experienced - a meditative place of artful contemplation in its own right.

In the process of my analytic thinking/creating and artful response to the students, I discovered the emblematic symbol of the research, the blank white page for which I created a lexicon:

everything
nothing
beginning
end
all color
no color
finality
possibility

⁸ The blank white page, prima materia, disorienting dilemma, vessel, time, chaos, beauty, ugly, parts, pieces, fragments, defamiliarization, ruins curiosity, experimentation, passion, rendering of self, yearning, awakening, world-making, idea, reading the world, deep learning, distillation, with a return to the blank white page.



Image 28 "White Pages". Textual, textural book assemblage. Actual size 12" x 20".

I also discovered that through my deep exploration with the students, together, we arrived full circle to edges of learning on the papier mache vessel I constructed at the beginning of my visual autoethnography. I began to see that I had visually portrayed a thought; that the students were visually portraying thoughts. As the white papier mache vessel transformed into yet another textural, textual collage book form with numerous pages for filling, I bound it with a pragmatic whip stitch that evokes a spiral quality of learning and experience, made visible through the ever evolving layers of experience.

In the process, I saw how I had yet underestimated my words, my living inquiry, and my own art as valid and valuable contributions to the class and to the Academy. I am not apart from this research endeavor. The course text provided the theoretical frameworks. But so did my words and my experiences. Teachers and students alike bring their life, work experiences and elements of knowledge to the classroom which they then piece, patch, glue, sew, staple together. Together, we construct the evolving formation of students' knowledge. This is what this research and construction of knowledge is about - it is about the texture and text of students (our) lives and constructed from shared experiences. We are learners together.

In minutes, words, ideas, images came together in an object of mysterious contemplation. While the emergence of my transformation of idea to image may seem to have been almost instantaneous, it was not instantaneous. It was the result of extended, progressive, dynamic interrelating studio engagement over a period of six years. One perspective of change includes recognition of transformation as an organized, cascading neurological event that is influenced by years of experience and neurological patterning (Ratey, 2001; Levitan, 2006). It is closer to the joyful, relaxing, expanding experience of flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990) in which the brain unleashes a cascade of smoothly connected, unfolding neurological patterns (Ratey, 2001; Levitan, 2006). We experience the delight and satisfaction of a brilliant, shining moment when an image is greater than the sum of its parts, and the moment feels numinous.

This is contrasted with the instantaneous neurological, retracting experience of flooding experienced in trauma where neural pathways are scrambled and disorganized from too much firing in the ancient limbic system that is keyed for survival (Ratey, 2001). In trauma and anxiety, neural pathways are flooded with ancient survival approaches of “fight or flight”, ‘kill or be killed’ - responses that are not as globally functional in 2010 as it was for primordial humans. Excessive and un-integrated activity from the primordial limbic system inhibits organized executive functioning (such as attention, inhibition, planning, internal ordering, motor control, regulation of emotion and motivation) that emanates from the pre-frontal lobes of the frontal cortex.

The students demonstrated transformational changes along the range of this spectrum - from anxiety-provoked, careful experimentation and retraction to smooth unfolding of considerations, and 'aha' moments akin to a light bulb being turned on. A longitudinal study of the students is needed to determine if the

transformations were transient or enduring changes to perspectives, meaning-making and behaviors. Assumptions and thought patterns are not easily disassembled or reconstructed. They are learned over long spans of time and they represent architecture of the Self.

An implication for adult learning educators and students alike is that transformations, like life, are an accumulation of experiences. As we keep returning to experiences and ideas, we develop multiple and increasing perspectives, over and over, while increasing our understanding through time. We do not know what relationship, experience or idea is going to be transformational or visibly transparent. As transformational educators, we need to be in a continual process of creating conditions and challenges that invite and allow for experimentation, exploration, imagination, and creativity because "it is in the process of effecting transformations that the human self is created and re-created" (Greene, 1988).

Restoration and Reparation

The developmental needs of adult learners are different than traditional eighteen-to-twenty-two year-old college students. Young adults are still developing socially and emotionally, and the college experience is as much about transition into adulthood as it is about identifying oneself in an academic field of interest. Adult learning students enter or return to academia having already encountered some degree, if not enormous amounts, of adult life, replete with relational, social and cultural responsibility. While pragmatism is a major engine of education, adult learning students are also, typically, at some point of adventurous encounter with life. They are students who portray the return to academia as driven by the need to complete "unfinished business" such as,

setting positive examples for their children, a means to professional advancement, a remedy for a sense of incompleteness or private shame, or a means of personal fulfillment. Students' stories include casts of characters and lively dynamics occurring over long periods of time, as was depicted in the data analysis. This recognition is supported in adult education literature (Tennant and Pogson, 1995) where education is a means of responding to some experience of meaning-making, not just professional pragmatism.

The collage process provided students with a venue for exploration through personal, artful expression. This was an unexpected and surprising experience for all of the students. It was not what they expected in higher education. Some collages were deep, dark and brutally honest. Others were expressions of common humanity, of mundane, boring, everyday living. Sharing within the group was authentic, transparent and often, surprisingly disclosing. Despite spiking charges of anxiety within defamiliarization, the students repeatedly referred to the collage experience as therapeutic, calming, and restorative, accompanied by stories of thwarted expressiveness and insecurity along the whole developmental spectrum of their lives. Through recognizing, witnessing and extrapolating the collage concept - organization of parts and pieces of an experience or an idea - to their relationships, the workplace, their families, to the whole of their lives - the students expressed relief and joy at an experience of a recovered self. Emily described it as having "found some lost part of herself" (as discussed in Affective Analysis). Collage, as an art form and a way of perceiving the world, provided the students an opportunity for profound pleasure, stimulating discovery and energized spirit.

In our culture, some forms of creative expression and self are more accepted than others, and some forms are more popular than others. In this research, it

became apparent that if meaning-making is to be a value in educating adult learners, there is much need for restorative and reparative work with adult learners. Too often academia is split as to the purpose and means of educating adult learners. Academia accepts meaning-making as a major concept in adult learning theory but is often stuck in traditional paradigms as to how that may be facilitated and manifested. The tension is increased in a business mentality in which education is increasingly viewed and valued as a commodity and has become increasingly competitive and market-driven. The outcome of an education, the educational product, is continually being recast towards quantifiable and pre-determined standards of measurement - a drive for outcomes-based education that now extends from elementary education to adult higher education (NEASC, 2010). Outcomes-based learning, equated with accountability and increased quality, may challenge, if not trump, processes of education and what learning potential lies within experience. The value of transformational learning, associated with, and facilitated through process, is simultaneously threatened. Not only is the Academy in a qualitative research revolution (as discussed in the Literature Review), it is in disequilibrium with world-roiling economic shifts, and perhaps, too, philosophical debate and redefinition as to the meaning and purpose of its own existence.

My experience as an artist-teacher researcher made it possible for me to extend my passion for collage into a source of usable knowledge and practical wisdom in the art of teaching. I share with my students deep appreciation for what Diaz (2004) describes as intense awareness of the sensations of living and an appreciation of being alive. My experiences in the studio make it possible for me to feel like I am living fully and passionately. Deep learning through studio methods and collage created a means of living inquiry that allowed the students and me to explore and hold multiple aspects of self and develop flexible

cognition regarding the impact of each, so that they could be integrated and lived wisely, with more consciousness.

From my deep immersion into the alchemical vessel for my imagination and creativity, collage became more than a contemporary form of fine arts. Collage became a way of knowing, of being aware of the way parts and pieces of life can come together, be taken apart, replaced and connected, in moments and collections of fragments, yet still a part of a living, rhizomatic whole. In the spirit of Jung (1961), collage can bring forth parts of life that are invisible, hidden underneath and within the rhizome of a plant - manifestations bloom, appear and wither as part of its life process, but the life force endures beneath the eternal flux.

References

- Aldrich, R. (1999). *Monsters and revolutionaries: Colonial family romance and metissage*. Durham: Duke University Press . Downloaded May 22, 2009. <http://www.questia.com/Index.jsp>
- Allen, A. (1995). *Art is a way of knowing*. Boston & London: Shambala.
- Bagley, C. & Cancienne, M.B. (Eds.). 2002. *Dancing the data*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Barrett, E. & Bolt, B. (Eds.) (2009). *Practice as research. Approaches to creative arts enquiry*. London, New York: I.B. Tauris.
- Barone and Eisner, E. (1997) . Arts-based Research. In Complementary Methods for research in Washington, D.C.: American Educational Research Association.
- Barron, F. , Montuori, A., Barron, A. (1997). (Eds.) *Creators on creating. Awakening and cultivating the imaginative mind*. New York: Tarcher/Putnam.
- Bayles & Orland, (1993). *Art and fear*. Santa Cruz, CA: The Image Continuum.
- Behar. R. (1996). *The vulnerable observer. Anthropology that breaks your heart*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Berg, B. (2004). *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences*. Boston: Pearson.
- Carter, K. (1993). In Greene, M. (1994). *Epistemology and educational research: The influence of recent approaches to knowledge*. L. Darling-Hammond (Ed.), *Review of Research in Education*, 20, 423-464.
- Berger, J. (2000). *Dancing on the threshold of meaning. Recognizing and understanding the growing edge*. 2(4). Journal of Transformative Education. Oct. 336-351. Sage Publications.
- Biddle, K. & Locke, K., (2007). *Composing qualitative research*. 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Booth, E. (1999). The everyday work of art. Awakening the extraordinary in your dialy life. Naperville, IL: Sourcebooks.
- Carbonetti, J. (1999). *The yoga of drawing. Uniting body, mind, and spirit in the art of drawing*. New York: Watson-Guptyl Publications.

- Chicago, J. (1974-1979). *The dinner party*. New York: Brooklyn Museum.
- Knowles, G. & Cole, A. (2007). *Handbook of the Arts in Qualitative Research: Perspectives, Methodologies, Examples, and Issues*. Walnut Creek: Sage Publications.
- Cochran-Smith, M. & Lytle, S. (1993). *Inside/Outside: Teacher Research and Knowledge*. Columbia University: Teachers College Press.
- Cranton, P. (1996). *Professional Development as Transformative Learning: New Perspectives for Teachers of Adults*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Creswell, J. (1998). *Qualitative inquiry and research design. Choosing among five traditions*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Csizszentmihalyi, M. (1990). *Flow. The psychology of optimal experience*. New York: Harper Perennial.
- De Cosson, A. (2004). The hermeneutic dialogic: Finding patterns midst the aporia of the artist/researcher/teacher. In Irwin, R. & de Cosson, A. (2004). (Eds.) *a/r/tography. Rendering self through arts-based living inquiry*. Vancouver, Canada: Pacific Educational Press.
- Deleuze, G. & Guittari, F. (1986). In Paley, N. (1995). *Finding arts place. Experiments in contemporary education and culture*. New York: Routledge. Kafka: Toward a minor literature. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Denzin, N. & Lincoln, Y.(Eds.) (2000). *Handbook of qualitative research*. 2nd. ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Denzin, N. & Lincoln, Y. (2008).(Eds.) *Collecting and Interpreting qualitative materials*. Los Angeles: Sage Publications.
- Derrida, J. (1930 - 2004)
- Dewey, J. (1934). *Art as experience*. Perigee.
- Dewey, J. (1938/1997). *Experience and education*. Macmillan.
- Diaz, G. (1998). *Leading with the arts: A way to teach our children*. Monograph published by the Research Committee of the International NETWORK of Performing and Visual Art Schools, Washington, DC.

- Diaz, G. (2002). "On Lighthouse Hill." in Bagley, C. & Canciene, M.B. *Dancing the data*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Diaz, G. & McKenna, M.B. (Eds.) (2004). *Teaching for Aesthetic experience. The art of learning*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Donovan, L. (2004). Unlocking the aesthetic experience: Exploring the arts in the classroom. In Diaz, G. & McKenna, M.B. (Eds.) (2004). *Teaching for Aesthetic experience. The art of learning*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Duncan, M. (2004). *Autoethnography: Critical appreciation of an emerging art*. 3 (4), December, International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 3(4), Article 3.
- Edinger, E. (1994). *Anatomy of the psyche. Alchemical symbolism in psychotherapy*. Chicago and La Salle, Illinois: Open Court.
- Eisner, E. (1998). *The Enlightened Eye: Qualitative Inquiry and the Enhancement of Educational Practice*. Prentice Hall.
- Eisner, E. (2002). *The arts and the creation of mind*. New Haven & London: Yale University Press.
- Eisner, E. (2007) In *Handbook of the Arts in Qualitative Research: Perspectives, Methodologies, Examples, and Issues*. Cole, A. & Knowles, G. Walnut Creek: Sage Publications.
- Elliot, T.S. (1943). *The four quartets*. Harcourt, Brace & World.
- Ellis C. & Bochner, A. (Eds.) (1996). *Composing ethnography. Alternative forms of qualitative writing*. Walnut Creek: Sage Publications.
- English, M., Fenwick, T. & Parsons, J. (2003). *Spirituality of adult education and training*. Malabar, Florida: Krieger Publishing Company.
- Entwistle, J. (2000). *Fashion and the fleshy body: Dress as embodied practice*. Fashion Theory. Vol. 4, Issue 3, pp.323-348.
- Erickson, E. (1959). *Identity and the life cycle*. W.W.Norton.
- Ferrier, J.L. (1999). *Art of the 20th Century*. Editions du Chene-Hachette Livre.

- Fordon, A. (2004). Arts-based educational studies: An "adventurous" option to arts-based educational research. Educational Foundations.
<http://findarticles.com/p/articles/>
- Fox, G. T. & Geichman, J. (2001). Creating Research Questions from Strategies and Perspectives of Contemporary Art. *Curriculum Inquiry*, Spring2001, Vol. 31, Issue 1, p 33.
- Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. Continuum: New York.
- Gardner. H. (1983). *Frames of mind. The theory of multiple intelligences*. Basic Books.
- Garrison, J. (1997). *Dewey and eros. Wisdom and desire in the art of teaching*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Geichman, J. & Fox, G.T, (2001). Creating research questions from strategies and perspectives of contemporary. *Curriculum Inquiry*. Vol.3(1).
- Glazer, S. (ed). *The heart of learning. Spirituality in education*. New York: Tarcher/Penguin.
- Glesne, C. (1999). *Becoming qualitative researchers. An introduction*. New York: Longman.
- Golden-Biddle, K. & Locke, K. (2007). *Composing qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Goldsworthy, A. (2004). *Rivers and Tides*. Documentary.
- Grabove, V. (1997). *The many facets of transformative learning theory and practice. New Directions for Adult & Continuing Education*. Summer 97(74). Obtained from Ebscoe database July 9, 2004.
- Greene, M. (1988). *Dialectic of freedom*. Columbia University: Teachers College Press.
- Greene, M. (1995). *Releasing the imagination. Essays on education, the arts and social change*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Greene, M. (2004). Carpe Diem. The arts and school restructuring. In Diaz, G. & McKenna, M.B. (Eds.) (2004). *Teaching for Aesthetic experience. The art of learning*. New York: Peter Lang.

- Guggenbuhl-Craig, A. (1980). *Eros on crutches*. University of Dallas: Spring Publications.
- Hartigan, L. (2007). Chief Curator. *Joseph Cornell Retrospective*. Salem, MA: Peabody-Essex Museum.
- Hein, G. E. (1999). "Is Meaning-making constructivism? Is constructivism meaning-making?". *The Exhibitionist*. 18 (2), 15-18, Fall.
- Hein, G. (2002). The challenge of constructivist teaching. In E. Mirochnik and D. C. Sherman (2002). *Passion and pedagogy: Relation, creation, and transformation in teaching*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Hetland, W., Winner, E., Veenema, S., & Sheridan, K.M. (2007). *Studio thinking: The real benefits of arts education*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- hooks, b. (1994). *Teaching to transgress: Education as the practice of freedom*. New York: Routledge.
- Hubbard, R. & Power, B. (1999). *Living the questions. A guide for teacher-research*. Portland, Maine: Stenhouse Publishers.
- Irwin, R. 2003. *Toward an aesthetic of unfolding in/sights through curriculum*. September 5, 2003. <http://cust.educ.ubc.ca/whatsnew/Papers/irwin/irwin.html> downloaded 5/262/2005.
- Irwin, R. & de Cosson, A. (2004). (Eds.) *a/r/tography. Rendering self through arts-based living inquiry*. Vancouver, Canada: Pacific Educational Press.
- Jaeger, R. (Ed.) (1997). *Complimentary methods for research in education*. Washington, D.C.: American Educational Research Association.
- Janesick, V. (2000). In Denzin, N. & Lincoln, Y.(Eds.) (2000). *Handbook of qualitative research*. 2nd. ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Jenoure, T. (200). *Sweeping the temple. A performance collage*. Bagley, C. & Cancienne, M.B. (Eds.). 2002. *Dancing the data*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Jipson, J. & Paley, N. (1997). (Eds.) *Daredevil research. Re-creating analytic practice*. New York: Peter Lang.

- Johnson, C. (1997). Lost in the woods. In Barron, F. , Montuori, A., Barron, A. (1997). (Eds.) *Creators on creating. Awakening and cultivating the imaginative mind*. New York: Tarcher/Putnam.
- Jung, C. G. (1961). *Memories, dreams and reflections*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Jung, C. G. (1969). *The archetypes and the collective unconscious*. 2nd ed. Princeton Bolligen Series XX.
- Jung, C.G. (2009). (Ed.) by S. Shamdasani. *The red book. Liber Novus*. Philemon Series. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.
- Jung Institute Summer Seminar, 2007. Boston, Massachusetts.
- Kettering, C. (1999). Why teacher research. In Hubbard,R. & Power, B. *Living the questions. A guide for teacher-research*. Portland, Maine: Stenhouse Publishers.
- Kohlberg, L. (1981). *Essays on Moral Development, Vol. I: The Philosophy of Moral Development*. Harper & Row.
- Knowles, G. & Cole, A. (2007). *Handbook of the Arts in Qualitative Research: Perspectives, Methodologies, Examples, and Issues*. Walnut Creek: Sage Publications.
- Knowles, M.S. (1990). *The adult learner: a neglected species (4th Edition)*. Houston, Gulf.
- Leggo, C. (2008). "A tangle of lines." In Springgay, S., Irwin, R. Leggo, & Gouzouasis,P. (Eds.) 2008. *Being with a/r/tography*. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.
- Levitin, D. J. (2006). *This is your brain on music. The science of a human obsession*. New York: Dutton.
- Lindeman, E. (1926) *Meaning of adult education*. New York: New Republic.
- MacIntyre Latta, M. (2001). Letting aesthetic experience tell its own tale: A reminder. *The Journal of Aesthetic Education*. Vol. 35, No.1, Spring, 2001. University of Illinois Press.
- Magritte, R. (1938). In Whitfield, S. (1992). *Magritte*. Metropolitan Museum of Art. New York.

- Makarius, M. (2004). *Ruins. Words and stones*. Italy: Editions Flammarion.
- McNiff, S. (1988). *Art-based Research*. London & Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
- McNiff, S. (2007). *Art-based Research*. In *Handbook of the arts in qualitative research*. Knowles, G. & Cole, A. (2007). Los Angeles: Sage Publications.
- Miller, H. (1997) Why don't you try to write? Barron, F. Montuori, A. Barron, A. (eds.) *Creators on creating. Awakening and cultivating the imaginative mind*. New York: Tarcher/Putnam.
- Mirochnik, E. (2002). *Passion and Pedagogy: Relation, creation, and transformation in teaching*. (Lesley College Series in Arts and Education, Vol.1. Peter Lang Publishing.
- Mezirow, J. (2000). *Learning as transformation. Critical perspectives on a theory in progress*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Myss, C. (2006). *The language of archetypes*. Boulder, CO: Sounds True.
- Neuman, M. (1996). Collecting ourselves at the end of the century. In Bochner and Ellis. *Composing ethnography. Alternative forms of qualitative writing*. Walnut Creek: AltaMira press, Sage Publications.
- New England Association of School and Colleges (NEASC). (2010).
- Paley, N. (1995). Finding arts place. *Experiments in contemporary education and culture*. New York: Routledge.
- Pearse, H. (2000). Praxis in perspective. In Irwin R. & de Cosson, A. (2004). (Eds.) *a/r/tography. Rendering self through arts-based living inquiry*. Vancouver, Canada: Pacific Educational Press.
- Pente, P. (2004). Reflections on artist/researcher/teacher identities: A game of cards. In Irwin, R., & de Cosson, A., ed. (2004). *a/r/tography. Rendering self through arts-based living inquiry*. Vancouver, Canada: Pacific Educational Press.
- Perry In *Dancing on the threshold of meaning. Recognizing and understanding the growing edge*. Berger, J. (2000). 2(4). Journal of Transformative Education. Oct. 336-351. Sage Publications.

- Picasso, P. *Glass and Bottle of Suze*, 1912. *Guitarra*, 1913.
<http://algargosarte.lacoctelera.net/post/2009/09/15/pablo-picasso-del-cubismo-anal-tico-al-cubismo-sint-tico-19>.
- Piaget, J. (1950). *The psychology of intelligence*. London & New York: Routledge.
- Pink, S. (2005). In *Art as research. Inquiry in the visual arts*. Sullivan G. (2005). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Pryer, A. (2004). Living with/in marginal spaces: Intellectual nomadism and artist/researcher/teacher praxis. In Irwin 2002 Diaz, G. (2002) in Bagley, C. & Cancienne, M.B. *Dancing the data*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Ratey, J.J. (2001). *A user's guide to the brain. Perception, attention, and the four theatres of the brain*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Richardson, L. (2000). Writing. A method of inquiry. In Denzin, N. & Lincoln, Y.(Eds.) (2000). *Handbook of qualitative research*. 2nd. ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Rilke, R. (1934/2002). *Letters to a young poet*. Dover Publications.
- Schick, in Le Van (2000). *Necklaces*.
- Singerman, G. (1999). *Art subjects. Making artists in the American university*. Berkley: University of California Press.
- Slattery P. & Langerook, N. (2002). Blurring art and science: Synthetical moments on the borders. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 32:3, 349-356.
- Smith, C. (2004). *Value added II: Soul in the classroom*. Conference Proceedings. 24th Annual Conference. Adult Higher Education Alliance (AHEA).
- Spreadbury, S. (2005). unpublished dissertation.
- Springgay, S., Irwin, R. Leggo, & Gouzouasis, P. (Eds.) 2008. *Being with a/r/tography*. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.
- Snowber, C. (2002) "Bodydance: Enfleshing soulful inquiry through improvisation". In Bagley, C. & Cancienne, M.B. (Eds.). 2002. *Dancing the data*. New York: Peter Lang.

- Snowber, C. (2004). An aesthetics of everyday life. In Diaz & McKenna, (2004). *Teaching for aesthetic experience. The art of learning*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Stake, R. & Kerr, D. (1995). *Magritte, constructivism, and the researcher as interpreter*. Educational Theory, Winter, 45(1). P. 55-62.
- Stravinsky, I. (1997). Poetics of music. In Barron, F., Montuori, A., Barron, A. (1997). (Eds.) *Creators on creating. Awakening and cultivating the imaginative mind*. New York: Tarcher/Putnam.
- Sullivan G. (2005). *Art as research. Inquiry in the visual arts*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Sullivan, G. (2008). Acknowledgements. In *Being with a/r/tography*. Springgay, S., Irwin, R., Leggo, C., Gouzousis, P. (Eds.) Rotterdam/Taipei: Sense Publishers.
- Taylor, E. (1998). (Ed.) *The theory and practice of transformative learning: A critical review*. Series No. 374. Ohio: ERI Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education.
- Tennant, M. & Pogson, P. (1995). *Learning and change in the adult years. A developmental perspective*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass.
- Tisdell, E. (2003). *Exploring spirituality and culture in adult and higher education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Van Manen, M. 1990). *Human science for action sensitive pedagogy*. New York: State University of New York Press.
- Vaughn, K. (2005). *Pieced together: Collage as an artist's method for interdisciplinary research*. International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 4 (1) March 1-21.
- Vidich, A. & Lyman, S. (2000). Qualitative methods. Their history in Sociology and anthropology. In Denzin & Lincoln. (2000). (Eds.) *Handbook of qualitative research*. 2nd ed). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Wilson, S. (2004). Fragments: Life writing in image and text. In Irwin, R. & de Cosson, A. (2004). (Eds.) *a/r/tography. Rendering self through arts-based living inquiry*. Vancouver, Canada: Pacific Educational Press.
- Wolcott, H. (2001). *Writing up qualitative research*. (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Yorks, L. and Kasl, E. (2006). *I know more than I can say: A taxonomy for using expressive ways of knowing to foster transformative learning*. 4:43-64. Journal of Transformative Education.

Appendices

Letter of Informed Consent

Dear Student:

You are invited to participate in research conducted in fulfillment of PHD requirements at Lesley University.

Title: An Artist-Teacher-Researcher Exploration of Arts-based, Constructivist Approaches With Adult Learners

Principle Investigator: Enid Larsen, M.S.W., M.Ed.

Description and Purpose:

This research is a qualitative study that will explore art-based, constructivist, post-modern approaches through collage and assemblage in a studio classroom of adult learners engaged in higher education. It will specifically explore the utilization of imagination, creativity, and aesthetics to further the understanding of studio experience in knowledge-and meaning-making through collagist and bricoleur practices. The research will question how collage and assemblage are metaphoric and analogous to contemporary life; how art-based learning is transformational and co-transformational; and how this constructed knowledge impacts adult learning.

Procedures:

Data gathering will occur during the delivery of the course, *ARS 409 IArt, Collage and Imagination*. Data will include: art artifacts from weekly assignments, a final art project, weekly student reflections in the form of response papers, a final reflection paper, class discussion, and faculty observation. Data collection may include photography of art artifacts and taping of discussions.

Risks:

Participation in this research is voluntary. You have the right to refuse to be in this study. If you decide to be in the study and change your mind, you have the right to drop out at any time. Student grading will not be factored into the research design, methodology or analysis of the research.

Confidentiality, Privacy and Anonymity:

You have the right to remain anonymous. If you elect to remain anonymous, your records will be kept private and confidential to the extent allowed by law. Pseudonyms will be used rather than your name on study records. Your name

and other facts that might identify you will not appear when this study or presented or published. If for some reason you do not wish to remain anonymous, you may specifically authorize the use of material that would identify you as a subject in the research.

You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep.

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____
Student's signature

Syllabus

Course Name: Art, Collage and Imagination
Course Number: ART 409
Credits: 3 undergraduate credits
Semester: Fall 2009
Time: 6-10 PM
Location: Room 112
Faculty: Enid E. Larsen, MSW, MEd

Course Description:

This seminar course will help each student develop an awareness of his or her own creative process. Student will learn to generate strategies for enhancing creativity through readings and discussion.

Theoretical Perspectives and Instructor's Comments:

Welcome to the studio course on Imagination and Creativity!

During our five weeks together, we will create a studio learning environment in which we will explore our personal and shared assumptions about imagination and creativity. The primary text we will use, *The Everyday Work of Art* redefines the way we think of 'art' and shows a practical way of making the creative process a part of the things we do each day. Booth (1999) reassures us that "Art is not apart. We all function in art, use the skills of art and engage in the action of artists every day." Hopefully, we will be surprised at how much you are already functioning in the realms of imagination and creativity. In addition to experimenting with various art materials and methods to facilitate your learning, we will particularly utilize the contemporary fine arts practice of collage and assemblage as a method for artistic expression and as a metaphor for functioning in modern life.

This studio class embraces an attitude of exploration. This means that those of you who are more comfortable with your creative self can deepen and expand your exploration. Those of you, who feel less experienced or uncertain about your creative self will have many opportunities to discover, take some chances, explore, and change some personal assumptions about your passion and understand it better. This course will give all of you the opportunity to more clearly understand concepts associated with imagination and creativity.

Within each class we will engage in artful (and playful!) activities through which you will gain exposure and experience with factors that influence your experience of imagination and creativity. The ability to harness imagination and creativity is fundamental to all the roles and obligations that we fulfill. This

seminar will be facilitated for practical application into your professional and personal lives.

A theoretical foundation in this studio class is recognition and appreciation for internal stimuli in adult learning. Jung claimed the “prima material”, the primary material of our life, as perhaps the most potent stimulation for human consciousness in that it is generated from within. The arts are an effective agent of change, disrupting and making unfamiliar what we take for granted as natural and normal. Increasing what is unfamiliar through creative art processes enables us to shake off the trapping of that which holds us down or maintains intellectual comfort zones and unquestioned assumptions.

Art and creative process can be transformational. The value of art to transformational learning lies in the many qualities inherent in the process of creating images and in the images themselves. In addition to art being an excellent means for accessing powerful realms of affect in transformational learning, art objects, through their symbolic power, allow us to discover or ‘try on’ different points of view. Art and creative art processes have the capacity to surprise, delight, provoke, and challenge our assumptions. Art brings up nuances and subtleties that may be difficult to speak in words. Images and creative art processes can help us to extract our words, provide structure for cognition, and create meaning in learning.

I look forward to exploring with you!

Course Objectives:

By the end of this course, students will:

- Identify everyday skills and actions of art related to imagination and creativity
- Understand role and value of chaos in creativity
- Identify personal blocks and impedances to creativity
- Learn how to increase ability to take and tolerate risk
- Develop a sense of one’s own personal creative process
- Develop appreciation for the role of collage and assemblage in modern living
- Increase skills in witnessing creative processes
- Learn how to increase ability to imagine and create in work and personal environments

Topical Outline:

- De-mystifying imagination and creativity
- Transitions
- Ways of knowing
- Elements of creative process
- Internal and external sources of stimulation
 - Body-mind connection
 - Physio-neurological influences
 - Socio-cultural influences
 - Psychological influences
- Value of chaos
- Aesthetics
- Creativity and leadership

Materials:

Basic art materials will be provided in class. Students are encouraged to augment their explorations with their own materials. Note: Please come to class dressed comfortably in clothing that does not inhibit engagement with art materials or with movement.

Learning Approaches:

A seminar approach uses a wide range of teaching and facilitative methods that are intended to create support, encouragement, stimulation for maximum participation and engagement of students, including: discussion and communication (written submissions, email, fax, tapes, telephone), journal writing, creative writing, art-making and reading aloud. Faculty will utilize processes to help students find ideas, create, reflect, and explicate work. The students and faculty will co-create activities.

As this seminar is conducted as a 5-week intensive, students will be expected to engage in out-of class assignments and to document time spent.

Required Readings:

Booth Eric (1999). *The everyday work of art. Awakening the extraordinary in your daily life*. Naperville, Illinois: Sourcebooks, Inc.
isbn: 1-57071-438-x .

Handouts and articles, as indicated by the instructor

Resources and Recommended Readings:

“A classroom library”: The imagination feeds upon and is nourished by multiple sources of stimulation. The following list represents a wide representation and range of writing on imagination and creativity. Most will be available for perusal

during the 5-week seminar, in addition to numerous other books of art techniques and skills that may be of interest for your exploration.

Baron, F. Montuori, A., Barron, A. (eds.). (1997). *Creators on creating. Awakening and cultivating the imaginative mind*. New York: Tarcher/Putnam.

Cameron, J. (1992). *The artist's way. A spiritual path to higher creativity*. New York: Tarcher/Perigee.

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1990). *Flow: The psychology of optimal experience*. New York: HarperPerennial.

Dickinson, E. (edited by T.H. Johnson). (1960). *The complete poems of Emily Dickinson*. Boston: Little, Brown & Co.

Edwards, D. (1996). *How to be more creative*. Mountain View, CA: Occasional Productions. ISBN: 0-933264-00-3

Elliot, T.S. (1943,1971). *Four quartets. IV,239-242*. New York: Harcourt Brace.

Goldsworthy, A. (2001). *Midsummer snowballs*. New York: Abrams.

John-Steiner, V. (2000). *Creative Collaboration*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Jung, C.G. (1961). *Memories, dreams reflections*. New York: Vintage.

McNiff, S. (1998). *Trust the process: An artist's guide to letting go*. Boston & London: Shambhala.

McNiff, S. (2003). *Creating with others. The practice of imagination in life, art & the workplace*. Boston & London: Shambhala.

McMeekin, G. (2000). *The 12 secrets of highly creative women. A portable mentor*. York Beach, Maine: Conari Press.

Mellick, J. 1996). *Creative ways to bring the wisdom of dreams to waking life. The natural artistry of dreams*. Berkeley: Conari Press.

Moore, T. (1978). *Care of the soul. A guide for cultivating depth and sacredness in everyday life*. New York: HarperCollins.

Ratey, J. (2001). *A user's guide to the brain. Perception, attention, and the four theatres of the brain.* New York: Pantheon.

Rilke, R. (1934/1962). *Letters to a young poet.* Norton: New York.

Von Oech, R. (1998). *A whack on the side of the head. How you can be more creative.* New York: Warner.

Helpful links:

http://www.rawfoodinfo.com/articles/qte_creatorig_main.html

<http://www.quotegarden.com/imagination.html>

http://www.angelfire.com/tx5/q_land/subject/imagination_creativity.html

<http://www.museumofbadart.org/>

Methods of Assessment:

Students will be assessed according to their own progress throughout the class in the following areas:

- Participation
- Timeliness
- Demonstration of conceptual understanding
- Demonstration of self-reflection
- Originality and invention
- Demonstration of understanding of curriculum requirements
- Clarity and articulation of creative processes
- Writing mechanics (final products)

Working with creativity and imagination is a process, and students develop their skills and understanding at an uneven pace. In an intensive delivery of the studio class, students will begin to explore ideas and concepts that understandably need time to integrate and skills that may take much longer to develop than throughout the seminar. The portfolio elements turned in at the end of the course are the final products and measure of what has been accomplished during the studio time period.

Assessment will include the following:

Course Product: A Portfolio

A progressive self-reflective document that supports the creation of the following elements:

- Annotated bibliography of text
- Free-writes

- Weekly creativity projects
- Progressive, weekly, reflective papers that include documentation of creative processes.
- Final reflection paper
- Final creative project
- Final presentation to class

Grading System: Letter grade.

Final Grading System

A	93-100
A-	90-92
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
F	0 - 69

Attendance Policy:

Full and on-time attendance is expected. The college defines excused absences as those situations of illness, crises or situations entirely beyond the student's control. Additional assignments may be provided for students who need to make up excused absences.

Full, focused, respectful and active participation is required in all large and small group activities and discussions, including being a respectful, actively responsive audience member during and after class discussions, and class performances/presentations, and in any on-line discussions.

ADA Policy:

A student qualifying as a person with a disability, as defined by Chapter 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, students may wish to discuss the need for reasonable accommodation with the instructor. Students should make this contact at the beginning of the semester.

Academic Honesty:

Please be aware of the college's academic honesty policy. Cheating/Plagiarism (to include the cutting and pasting of unmodified code from the internet) is grounds for failure in the course, and possible academic dismissal.

Cheating and Plagiarism

- a.) Cheating is defined as the attempt, successful or not, to give or obtain aid and/or information by illicit means in meeting any academic requirements.
- b.) Plagiarism is defined as the use, without proper acknowledgement, of the ideas, phrases, sentences, or larger units of discourse from another writer or speaker.

Students are expected to know and abide by the policy as stated in the college catalogue and student handbook.

1 Week One

"Dwell in Possibility"

Emily
Dickinson

Pre-Assignments

1: Bring an "object"

Please prepare to introduce yourself by bringing to the first class some visual aid /an object/ a "thing" /an art piece / a tangible "something"/ an important "something"/ that is meaningful to you and introduces you in a way that others probably do not know about you. Even though you may know others in your class, I encourage you not to share your "object" with your classmates in advance. **Give each of us the opportunity to be surprised and delighted to get to know you differently.** If you are uncertain about what to bring, consider the following: size does not matter, trust your heart on what is important to you, there is no right or wrong object, but the passion that is roused by your object is of utmost importance. Allow yourself to imaginatively enter the world of the object and let the story feed your imagination and stir your emotions, and subsequently help to tell your story.

Questions/prompts to consider:

How does this object express you?

How does this object speak for you?

What is the passion story between you and this object?

2. Read: Booth, Eric (1999). *The everyday work of art. Awakening the extraordinary in your daily life.* Chapters 1-4.

Introduction to the Studio/Seminar

Syllabus review

Assumptions and expectations

Digital Art Presentation: “Why Make Art?” (Toler, 2004 MEd Arts and Learning Alumni)

Student introductions with object

Assimilation of concepts:

- Collage and assemblage

- Paying attention

- Thinking from the inside out

- Internal sources of stimulation

- Authenticity

- Risk-taking

- “they”

- World-making

- World-exploring

- Reading the world

- Yearning

- Attentive noticing

- Witnessing

- Cognition

Group Art Activity: **Mural**

As a group, we will co-create a mural (4’ x 8-12’ – depending on class size) using a variety of coloring materials, i.e. oil and chalk pastels. Please dress comfortably as we will work on the floor.

Free-write:

Discussion and Assimilation of concepts:

- Role of play

- Risk-taking

- Aesthetics

- Role of community in passion, aesthetics and cognition

Closure

2Week Two

“The growing edge is its own teacher. Although finding the edge may require a guide and staying there requires support, ultimately the way through the confusion is to grow, and only the person at the edge can do that growing. There is a complex continuum

that ranges from those who seek out and enjoy transformation to those who are in anguish while at the edges of their understanding.”

Berger, *Dancing on the Threshold of Meaning. Recognizing and Understanding the Growing Edge* (2004)

Assignments due:

1. Reflection paper – 2 pages
2. Read: Booth, Eric (1999). *The everyday work of art. Awakening the extraordinary in your daily life*. Chapters 5-7.
3. Create a **vessel** from any materials that engage you. Think of a vessel in the broadest definition of the word – that which will imaginatively and metaphorically contains and holds you/your artistic passions as you engage in your study.

Questions/prompts to consider:

What does this vessel mean to you?
How does/can this vessel contain you and/or your passions?
How is the selection of materials important to you?
How is this vessel a metaphor for you?
Anything else?

Check in:

Class discussion and assimilation of concepts:

Vessel art project and reflection papers
Containment/holding environments through art

Class discussion:

Intelligence
Multiple ways of knowing
Disorientation
Regulation of stimuli/biological/neurological/emotional
Sources of stimulation for creativity and imagination
Disorientation

Group Activities:

Temperament Survey (Aron),
Multiple Intelligences Survey (Gardner)
Bad Art (**Says who?**)

Free-write:

Art activity: **Collage:** “The inner critic”

Free-write:

Class discussion and assimilation of concepts:

The inner critic

Aesthetics

Closure

3 Week Three

“Play combined with creative art process is a potent and fertile combination. It taps directly into what you know, bypassing interpretation and explanation. It bears no responsibility beyond the moment, it is not self-conscious, it distorts the sense of time, it seeks control within different kinds of order, and it tells the truth. What you know meets with what you do not know.”

Booth, 1999

1. Assignment due:

2. Booth, Eric (1999). *The everyday work of art. Awakening the extraordinary in your daily life.* Chapters 8-10.

3. Reflection Paper: 1-2 pages

Check in

Discussion and review of concepts and reflection papers

In-class activity: **Play with Clay**

Free-write:

Discussion and assimilation of concepts:

Play

Time

Prima material (Jung)

Flow (Czikzentmihalyi)

Closure

4Week Four

“When intuition and logic combine to direct our action, we discover our most authoritative individual voice.(Booth, 1999). When we include the felt body sensations and knowledge derived from our body’s engagement with art, our knowledge becomes embodied.

Assignment due:

1. Read: Booth, Eric (1999). *The everyday work of art. Awakening the extraordinary in your daily life.* Chapters 11-13.
2. Reflection Paper: 1-2 pages.

Check-in

In-class activity: **Movie: *Rivers and Tides: Working with Time. Andy Goldsworthy***

Free-write:

Discussion and assimilation of concepts
Creative process
Reading the world
Passion and generativity
Closure

5Week Five

“Intense aesthetic perception derives from an awareness of the sensations of living, and an appreciation of being alive. The arts engage the senses in an exploration of possibilities. The arts allow us to represent our truth, our assumptions and our imagination through dance, music, painting and drama. The arts make connections between experience and vision. They promote discovery, nurture trust, and generate transformation. The arts are about life. Let’s teach an appreciation of life in our schools.”
Diaz, *Leading with the Arts*(1998)

Assignment due:

1. Portfolio:
 - Annotated bibliography
 - All free-writes
 - All reflection papers
 - Final Integrative Paper (7-10 pages)
 - Creativity piece

Presentation (length to be determined)

Presentations

Discussion, assimilation and review of concepts as derived from student presentations

Reclamation

Closing Ritual

Course Evaluation

Syllabus subject to change based on the needs of the class.